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THE
UNKNOWN ISLE

BY

PIERRE DE COULEVAIN

Author of "On the Branch," "American Nobility," etc.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY

ALYS HALLARD

CASSELL AND COMPANY, LTD.

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INTRODUCTION

THE UNKNOWN ISLE! It is not, as might be supposed, in the Pacific or Arctic Ocean, but seven hours and a half from Paris, *via* Calais-Dover. On a clear day its white cliffs can even be seen from the French coast. This island is England, the body with many arms of the great British Empire. Steamboats go backwards and forwards between it and us, we are united by a cable, we are in communication with each other, but we are not yet in communion. For the majority of French people it is *terra incognita*. They neither know the language nor the true character of its inhabitants, its history nor its literature. For years past they have gone on repeating the words which had lingered in uncultured minds, without asking themselves whether such words were true or whether they had ever been true. Our neighbours, the inhabitants of the island, did the same with regard to us. We have slandered each other mutually, we have flung insult at each other like two childish nations. "You are people without any morality, without decency," they shouted to us from the other side of the Straits.

"You are hypocrites, whited sepulchres, egotists," we replied from this side. And every day some of these projectiles, in the form of adjectives, caused wounds in patriotic love and vanity; wounds which heal with great difficulty.

In the lower strata of the two nations, there was that racial hatred which ought no longer to be found except among savages. In the intermediary strata, the deep-rooted hatred was

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kept up by the remembrance of defeats, daring invasions, unjust claims, non-comprehension, ignorance, and envy. In the upper classes it was very much attenuated. In France, even at the present time, the English are detested because they conquered us at Waterloo, because they come to the Opera in tourist costume, and because they fill railway compartments with their endless parcels. The comical part of it is that these grievances are uttered by people who have never read the account of the Battle of Waterloo, who never go to the Opera, and who never travel.

In England, in the same class, there is not any more justice nor yet any more common sense than here. In dissenting chapels the ministers are ever ready to preach against the French. Numbers of worthy old maids, of British matrons, and of grave and serious men conscientiously believe us to be utterly immoral. They speak of us with lowered voice, in an abashed way, just as they would speak of something improper, or of "the old gentleman," to whom we are supposed to be closely related.

In novels and at the theatre, the odious person is always French. If there should be an English woman who is not as she should be, rest assured that her dresses are made by Doucet or Pa[illegible]uin, for we must be in it, in some way. French men and French women of English manufacture have not a single true feature. Either English authors have no intuition, or they do not take the trouble to study our character. This is as great a pity for them as it is for us.

Our bad reputation does not prevent our neighbours from coming to visit us. On the contrary, they come to Paris just as everyone moves instinctively towards the light. Unfortunately, they are contented with exploring the race-courses, the Boulevards, and with frequenting the music-halls. They

go away again without having exchanged a word or an idea with a French person, without having seen anything of our higher or family life, without having a single true notion about our habits and customs, or our country. It will be like this still for many years. These little journeys give a sort of prestige to the Englishman. In his private circle, people imagine that he has seen and done unheard-of things. He does not deny this, you may be very sure.

As to the French, most of them systematically avoid going to England, so fully persuaded are they that there is nothing to learn there. When they have to go for their business affairs, they notice nothing but the bad climate and the grey skies, and they return home with the pleasant conviction that everything is better in their own country.

It is difficult to comprehend that two nations who are such close neighbours should have made no attempt to understand each other better. Mutual ignorance, as regards language, is the cause of all the misunderstandings between John Bull and Madame la France.

And yet it is not unintentionally that Providence has placed the English and French opposite each other. The masculine and feminine element must exist through all the universe, even with the Creator. The Saxon and German races are eminently masculine, the Latin and Slavic races are eminently feminine. When we examine things closely, we see that their quarrels are above all sex quarrels. In Southern Europe, the three Latin sisters, France, holding by the hand Italy and Spain, are, as it were, upheld by England and Germany. From these masculine nations they receive their impetus and often their initial movement, but in return they exercise over the two nations a powerful psychical, beneficial, and civilising influence. Since a kind of "interrupter" has been placed on the

German side, the current of action has increased with our neighbours. We find food for England, and her money benefits several of our provinces. We enrich the English dictionary with a multitude of words necessary for expressing various states of mind and shades of feeling. Our dictionary is enriched by England with words for sport and action. In spite of our mutual ill-will, of our individual resistance, we influence each other more and more all the time.

The French language is in favour in the Unknown Isle. With us the English nursery governess is taking the place of the German, and our little ones are beginning to talk English.

The Chinese wall, which ignorance had erected in the midst of the Channel, is gradually getting lower. When it has disappeared, both French and English will be surprised to discover that there were so many worthy people behind it. The work of demolition began some time ago. By offering these pages of my diary, written in the Unknown Isle, I am giving my little blow with the hammer.

THE UNKNOWN ISLE

Ich dien: I serve.

Paris.

It does not belong to a Prince alone, this device, but to all creatures in the universe. It contains their reason for existing, and consequently mine, too.

"I serve." Since I have been living "on the branch," like one of my heroines, I have felt more keenly the action of the forces which guide my life, and they do as they will with me, poor, stray leaf that I am! I am once more, and for perhaps the tenth time, turned in the direction of England. How has this come about? At present the "how" of things interests me as much as the "wherefore."

This winter, after reading the Memoirs of Berlioz, I felt an irresistible desire to hear some music, and particularly his music. I knew that I should have this joy at Monte Carlo, and that I should have it to perfection in the midst of unique scenery, and so I set off at once. Some Scottish friends had recommended the Hotel Windsor, ten minutes away from the Casino. They assured me that I should find nice people there and the tranquillity I needed, so it was at this hotel that I decided to stay.

On the day of my arrival, the head waiter showed me to one of those little tables for one person, which are not always placed in the best position. One person is so unimportant, scarcely worth considering.

Just in front of me were two English ladies, evidently mother and daughter. The latter captivated my attention at once. Her golden brown hair, the colour of a fresh chestnut, had not

been twisted up by the dry hand of a Puritan. The chignon of Madame and Mademoiselle John Bull is always very characteristic. The complexion of the Englishwoman in question was white, but warm. Magnificent blue eyes, of great depth, softened the somewhat hard expression of her aquiline nose and the disdainful arch of her refined mouth. It was a face full of contrasts which could not fail to arouse my interest. I thought she must be about thirty years of age. The first time our eyes met, over the mother's white cap, we gazed at each other for rather a longer time than strict politeness allows. For a whole week this play of invisible, but not imperceptible, rays continued between us, the play by means of which we enter into contact with each other, and which somewhat resembles a fencing bout. When my neighbour made a step forward I went a step back. I cannot explain this instinct of coquetry even in friendship, but it exists. I felt that we were going to know each other and I was curious to see how this was to come about.

One afternoon, on crossing the hall, I saw my future friend talking to an American woman whom I knew. The latter beckoned to me in a friendly way. I approached and the introduction took place. There was nothing complex about it. We talked of the weather, of good and bad luck, of roulette, of trente et quarante, of all the evil gods of the place. Madame Cahart noticed that we had our hats and jackets on.

"Well," she said, with the prettiest unceremoniousness possible, "why do you not go for your constitutional together? That would be more pleasant for both of you. Life is so short that it is a pity to waste any of it in formalities."

This American philosophy made us laugh, and Miss Baring looked at me with an expression of comic distress. There was no alternative for me, but to invite her to accompany me. I did so as gracefully as I could, and we started off, curiously enough brought together, or rather brought together again, and as we walked we both accommodated our speed to keep in step with each other. Places that we both knew served at first for a common ground of conversation, but either our

mutual liking for each other had drawn us together, or there existed some anterior or future bond between us, for we were soon on quite friendly terms, and this seemed likely to continue.

I do not remember what we were discussing when I happened to say: "If you were a Catholic, you would understand that." To my great surprise, Miss Baring blushed violently, and appeared confused, and then, with all the emotion she might have experienced in confiding to me a secret very near her heart, she told me that she had recently been converted to Catholicism.

"Ah, how interesting!" I said. "I adore stories of conversions; do tell me about yours."

The colour which again rose to the face of my companion, and a nervous twitch at the corner of her mouth, made me realise my indiscretion.

"Oh, forgive me," I said, thoroughly ashamed of myself. "I was carried away by my curiosity about the human soul. A confidence of that kind could not be made to a stranger."

Miss Baring looked at me with her beautiful, deep eyes.

"A stranger!" she repeated. "You do not seem that to me."

And under the pressure of the current of our mutual liking for each other, she dropped her reserve and described to me the different phases of the psychical phenomenon she had experienced.

"Catholicism, its symbols and its ceremonies, had always fascinated me," she avowed. "When I entered one of your churches I always felt a presence there, something that made a thrill run through me."

"The sacred thrill," I said, smiling. "Oh, then you were certainly prepared for conversion."

"Three years and a half ago," she continued, "a Jesuit came to Wimbledon, where we live, to preach the Lent sermons. I had the curiosity to go to hear him. I was struck by the logic and the connection of the dogmas exposed. It seemed to me that there was really a religion there. The wish to become a Catholic took possession of me. The fear of distressing my

mother and my repugnance to the confession kept me from yielding for several months. One must have waged this moral combat," continued Miss Baring, "in order to know how painful it is. I felt myself called and held back, drawn on and repulsed, until an urgent need of help finally gave me the courage to take the great step, and I entered the Roman Church."

"How did your mother take this change of religion?" I asked.

"Like a true Englishwoman, she respected my liberty of conscience and did not utter any reproach; but when she sees me going to Mass, or to any ceremony whatever, her face unconsciously takes a cold, severe expression. She is absolutely incapable of comprehending the spirit of Catholicism. She considers it as a collection of superstitions. It seems to her that it is a religion for the lower classes only, for people who do not wash. She maintains that our priests are not gentlemen, because they are too careless of dress and appearance. Her own religion suffices entirely for her."

"All this confirms my idea," I said. "I believe that there are Catholic mentalities and Protestant mentalities. Among Protestants one comes across people with a Catholic mentality, and they, on joining the Catholic Church, find the spiritual elements that are necessary to them. True Protestants are never converted."

"Well then, my mother and my brothers are certainly of that category," replied my companion with a half-smile.

A confidence of this kind naturally led us quickly to greater intimacy. During our daily walks we touched on all subjects—except love. An Englishwoman avoids speaking of that, but does not think of it any the less notwithstanding. These chats brought us curiously near to each other. In spite of our difference of age, we became friends, almost chums. Miss Baring is not an old maid, but an unmarried woman. Some women are born old maids, others merely remain unmarried. I recognise in her a fair number of the characteristics of the

Anglo-Saxon race; a horror of sentimentality, admiration of strength, temperament, great self-command, and a need of activity. Outdoor sports, of which she is passionately fond, have kept her physically young, have given muscle to her body, so to speak. She is remarkably intelligent, but not intellectual. Her history is that of a person who, by birth and instinct, ought to take the journey of life first class, but for want of means has been obliged to go second class. She has never been able to assimilate herself to her travelling companions, but has remained in dignified isolation and has all the time been annoyed by their manners and their ideas. Fortunately, she has two brothers, who give her interest in life. The elder one is secretary to her uncle, Sir Richard Baring, a great London solicitor, the other holds some post in a Canadian mining company. As for Mrs. Baring, she seems to me to be the very incarnation of that ancient English respectability which is being gradually transformed day by day. Edith has succeeded in inspiring her mother with some of her own friendship for me, so that before leaving Monte Carlo she invited me to spend a few weeks with them at Wimbledon. Both mother and daughter insisted on this in such affectionate terms that I accepted.

I am invited from the fifteenth of May to the fifteenth of June. This English custom of fixing the date of arrival and departure for guests is eminently practical. It makes the situation clear and the hosts are thus spared a great deal of useless ceremony.

I am starting, then, for England to-morrow. Why am I again being led thither? My mission is that of the humble, of the very humble. I am going to take a few words from France for English minds and bring back impressions from England to transmit to French minds. That may be something very great, after all—and I have the inward delight of feeling myself necessary. I feel the pride of an old diplomat, who, in spite of his age and his white hair, is sent to an important post, and I am glad to be able to say still: "*Ich dien.* I serve."

St. Olaf, WIMBLEDON.

THE halt! The Unknown Isle! Every time that I have to fold up my tent again, or, more prosaically, to pack my trunk, I feel a mixture of regret, pleasure, and distressing apprehension; but when once I am in the station omnibus on the way to my train, I become calm again. I look out at the people and things of Paris with a traveller's eyes. Faces and forms seem quite different to me. I go through parts of Paris where I have never been and I promise myself to return there some day. Next comes the registering of the luggage, the bustle of the departure, the installation in the compartment, and then all is over. What a relief! The starting of the train, that initial movement towards the unknown, always gives me a pleasurable sensation. Everyone agrees in declaring English people to be bad travelling companions. I have never found this. An elderly woman is a better judge of the education of men than a young one. I am always delighted to travel with a Britisher. I know that I can count on a pair of willing arms for lifting down my bag, and on some one for hailing a porter for me. According to my idea, a Frenchman is less genial. He is a long time forgetting all the annoyance of the departure. This can be seen in his nervous, spasmodic gestures, in the way he pats his pockets to assure himself that he has not forgotten anything. He always looks as though he is saying: "I am not to be worried."

On this occasion I had in my carriage two Englishmen and three Frenchmen: a *Times*, a *Morning Post*, a *Gaulois*, a *Matin*, and an *Echo de Paris*. Each of the readers had just the look of his paper. I sometimes amuse myself with making inward wagers as to what newspaper will come out of the pockets of my neighbours, and I rarely lose.

There is no route so monotonous as that of Paris to Calais. I look out with childish impatience for the buildings of the *Société Anonyme des Ciments français*. They fascinate me irresistibly. Their chalky colour, the pools of smoking lime,

the human beings all completely white, produce a dry, sad-looking *ensemble*, with no light or warmth, and this gives me a pang at my heart, and at the same time fascinates me. Black industries seem to me less mournful than white ones.

I do not know whether the neighbourhood of England is already making itself felt, but not far from Calais, on the side of a sand-hill, some big letters formed by pebbles were to be seen, spelling the words: "Glory to Jesus Christ." It was, perhaps, the result of some religious vow. At the first breath of sea-air that entered the compartment, I put my head out of the window to have a view of the Channel. Yesterday the weather had not been reassuring.

Our crossing was, on the whole, disagreeable. The saloon of the new turbine boat was well arranged and airy. The divans were covered with cretonne, and there were flowers about here and there. The stewardess, with her white cap, went through her trying service with great dignity. She owned to me that during her first year she had suffered herself with sea-sickness, and had been obliged to make superhuman efforts for this not to be seen. When I was pitying her for having to attend to the passengers, she said: "I like helping my fellow creatures and doing things for them. I could not live for myself alone."

As soon as one sets foot on English ground, even on the moving ground of steamers, one has an impression of liberty and discipline, of those two great things which make England's strength. When the boat stops, a gang of porters, dressed in dark blue, with caps and sweaters bearing the initials of the Company, arrive on the bridge. At a given signal the rope which holds them back is taken away, and, with a fine, simultaneous movement, they all seize the luggage and carry it to the train that is already made up. In a loud voice one of the officials calls out "Charing Cross!" "Victoria!" and the passengers then know in which compartment to get for either of these two stations.

At Calais, I had left bright sunshine and clear atmosphere, summer, in fact. At Dover, after a crossing of an hour and a

quarter, I was in the midst of autumn, with a grey, lowering sky, lead-coloured water, and a harsh wind through which could be heard the shrill cry of sea-gulls. I was stupefied by this, and for the first time I realised that England was in the North Sea. As we travelled away from the coast this autumnal impression disappeared, and I soon began to feel the restful calm of rural England. With its fresh green, its fine trees, its carpets of thick grass, it seems as though it must have been created —and perhaps, indeed, it really was—for the rest of eye and limb of a nation of workers. It was not without pleasure that I again saw the Kent hops, its cottages, with their pretty paths, its lambs grazing in savoury pasturage, all carefully provided with troughs. In England the animals' table is always supplied with water. All along the route we saw, here and there, moving flecks of light colour, human beings playing tennis, cricket, or football. They ran forward, rushed back, waved their arms about, crowded together, and then moved away again. From afar, and particularly from the height of the railroad, all this seemed droll and incomprehensible.

Now that I see things more thoroughly, the approach to a city like London or Paris causes me a certain emotion. I have only a very feeble conception of what they really are, but that suffices for giving me the sensation of my smallness. It seems to me that I am about to disappear in an immensity of life. I like London and even its odour, a bitter odour of wet coal, of gas, and of smoke. I should recognise it among a thousand other odours, and I need to inhale it from time to time. The approaches to the English metropolis are not attractive. Grey, black, a crude medley of posters, signs with letters out of all proportion, the eye is struck with all this. The train advances slowly, above an infinite expanse filled up with low houses and short chimney pots, houses that one would take for burrows rather than for human habitations.

The spires though, the church towers, the tall stacks of manufactories, the sky, crossed and recrossed with telegraph wires, the Thames, its bridges, all this soon gives one an im-

pression of colossal force and one feels that one is in the midst of a very great nation.

Miss Baring was waiting for me at Victoria Station.

"I am very glad to see you again," she said, shaking hands heartily, whilst her voice and the expression of her beautiful blue eyes left no doubt about the sincerity of her words.

The porters here give special attention to women passengers. There is a certain masculine authority about them, an instinct of protection which is regardless of the tip and which has something of the gentleman in it. A brisk fellow had soon found us a cab, put the luggage on it, seen us in, and called out to the driver: "Waterloo!"

Wimbledon is about forty-five minutes away from London, and can be reached either by the underground or the ordinary railroad. We took the latter, and at the station of the little suburban town we found porters and cabs. In this practical country nothing is neglected for helping individuals in their travels. Everyone is sure of always having the "right thing in the right place." In less than ten minutes, after driving up a rather steep hill, passing through a gateway and along a short, winding avenue, we arrived in front of a house surrounded by flowers. Under the porch, which was covered with climbing plants, stood Mrs. Baring, already dressed for dinner. She came forward to meet me, and her hearty greeting made me feel that I was very welcome at St. Olaf.

Edith took me to my room and the very look of it refreshed me instantaneously. I felt that I had come to something so wholesome. The background of trees, the lawn with rose trees all round to be seen through the open windows, then the light paper in the room itself, with cretonne to match it, and some beautiful lithographs on the walls, made a very gay setting, and in this setting everything seemed to be waiting for me. There was the large polished brass bedstead, then an armchair near to the window, a writing-table facing the garden, a sofa in a good light, books for bedroom reading in a corner, open drawers in the chest, and flowers on the Queen Anne chimney-piece. A few lingering rays of the setting sun

and the scent of the acacia trees put the living touches to this charming picture. What was still more living was the solicitude for my comfort that all these arrangements proved. My friend had not forgotten anything, not even my preference for Atkinson's Eau de Cologne. I expressed my gratitude to her.

"Do not thank me," she said, "for it has all been such a pleasure to me."

After drinking the cup of tea, which is the bread and salt of English hospitality, I began to dress, and when the second dinner-gong pealed out I was ready.

In the drawing-room, which I entered with Edith, I found Mrs. Baring and her son waiting for me. The latter was introduced, and his size made rather an effect upon me.

I had an immediate impression of big feet and big hands, and then I had a sudden intuition that the visit of a Frenchwoman at St. Olaf did not precisely charm him, and that he considered it as a "deadly nuisance." The only thing, then, was to make a conquest of him as quickly as possible, and conquests at my age are not particularly easy!

My host, in spite of his inclinations, took me gravely in to dinner. The dining-room seemed to me delightfully homelike. In a framework of dark oak the table stood out brilliantly light and white. There was a centre of pale yellow silk and the lamp-shade matched it. The flower vase in the middle of the table was filled with hawthorn, whilst sprays of laburnum, here and there on the cloth, relieved the heaviness of the English silver and china. According to her usual custom, Mrs. Baring took her place at the head of the table and pronounced the few words of thanksgiving, which precede and follow the meal. After the soup she carved the meat, according to the British fashion in simple homes.

Rodney Baring certainly looked very well, seated there at his mother's table. His square shoulders owe nothing to the tailor, of that I am quite sure. He is an Anglo-Saxon *pur sang*, very masculine, very awkward, and very correct, with fair hair shading to red, light blue eyes, and very clear-cut features.

There is a limpid, tender look in his eyes, but his clean-shaven mouth has a severe, determined expression. He has the mouth of a judge, or a politician, and it attracted my attention at once.

Plenty of fresh air has given to his delicate skin that beautiful olive colouring which the Englishman secretly delights in, and which women like.

I did my utmost, at once, towards winning over this handsome young man. He was observing me, over the roast beef, with mingled curiosity and uneasiness. His expression changed when he heard me speak English. I tried to make him enter into the conversation by asking indirect questions. He replied at first briefly, and I could feel his resistance, so to speak, at the end of each of my remarks, but it gradually grew less marked, and, to the evident relief of Edith, I broke the ice victoriously, with politics. After dinner we played bridge. My French irreverence roused the young man's gaiety and brought into the corner of his eye and to his lips that double smile which, with an Englishman, betrays humour and an inclination for teasing. It was in this way that our two minds caught on to each other finally. When I retired he shook hands with me in quite a different way from his manner of welcoming me on my arrival, and when he closed the door after me I heard, from the staircase, his criticism to his mother:

"What a jolly woman!" he said, and though this was, perhaps, not precisely respectful, I was enormously flattered. The hostility and antipathy of my host, even carefully disguised, would have spoilt the pleasure of my visit to a singular degree. I feel tranquil, now, for an Englishman never detests a "jolly woman."

St. Olaf.

St. Olaf looks more like a country house than a suburban villa. Built on high ground, at a time when land was not parcelled out, it has plenty of air, space, and a magnificent view over the Surrey hills. It even possesses a small meadow, fine trees, a kitchen-garden with an abundance of strawberries

and vegetables, and these are veritable dainties on English tables.

By the side of the tennis lawn is a movable, rustic summer-house. Climbing plants, in a flourishing condition, frame the pretty windows. The walls inside are covered with sail-cloth and ornamented with fishing nets. A hammock does duty for a rocking-chair, and there are books, flowers, a crowd of queer objects and men's playthings about. It is, of course, Rodney's special property, and he receives his men friends and even women friends here, and above all smokes innumerable pipes.

Between the four walls of the St. Olaf house, those four walls completely covered with flowers and foliage, everything is to be found that is necessary for people of refined habits and tastes. The architecture is of the Queen Anne style, which at present is so much in favour. Its porch, its windows, with folding shutters, give it a distinctly ancient look, rather a Puritanical look, in fact, which is very well described by the word "quaint." The day after my arrival, Miss Baring showed me all over the house.

The drawing- and dining-rooms and the library all open on to a square hall which is well furnished with an old clock, two chests, a table, and two Chippendale seats. On the walls are family portraits. I was full of admiration for this exquisite eighteenth-century furniture; the warm, soft polish and the simple elegance of line charmed me, and I could not resist touching it.

"I am glad that you appreciate our Chippendale," said Edith; "it is all we possess that is valuable."

The St. Olaf drawing-room has no pretension to luxury, thank Heaven. Three good pictures, a grand piano, a writing-table, a revolving bookcase filled with books, give it a familiar, home-like look. The plants, flowers, and a few objects brought from Italy, relieve the heaviness of the English furniture.

The library is the morning and evening room, the room in which my hosts live. Only one side of it is lined with books,

and here, too, there are family portraits and also some old prints and the photographs of various friends.

On the Queen Anne chimney-piece are some Delft vases, filled with beautiful ferns, and a very old clock. A French window, with nothing whatever of Queen Anne about it, but very convenient, opens on to the garden. An arched bay-window, with a low seat round it, forms one of those cosy corners so often seen in English houses. This one seems specially suitable for flirtations, or for twilight chats. In this comfortable room, there are nice arm-chairs and a large writing-table. Everyone comes in here to write letters, read the papers, or rest after a walk. The animals, dogs and a cat, have access to this room and are frequent visitors. All this creates an atmosphere in which one feels at ease.

Various oil paintings and water colours are hung on the walls of the staircase and landing. The bedrooms of my hosts are as light and cheerful as mine. Each one is extremely characteristic. In Rodney's there are riding-whips, boxing-gloves, tennis rackets, and an iron boot-rack, on which thirty-two pairs of boots are arranged in a row. I counted them myself, for they amused me. An Englishman has a special affection for his boots. On each side of the chimney-piece, there are portraits of pretty women, professional beauties, fastened on to the wall. Then all round the room are photographs or drawings of boats, yachts, and everything that goes on water. One would think that the proprietor of this room should have been a sailor.

In Edith's room there is a curious assembly of different kinds of objects: slates covered with "scores," a golf bag, riding-whips, portraits of horses and dogs. Walnut furniture, of somewhat disappointing simplicity, then a very elegantly appointed dressing-table, some pictures with religious subjects and devotional books, the long Lourdes rosary and a little statue of St. Anthony of Padua. All this exteriorises my friend admirably, her need of physical activity, her instinctive feminine coquetry, the spirituality of her Catholic soul.

In Mrs. Baring's rooms the furniture is covered with green

rep and the curtains are of the same material. There are portraits of three children and of Mr. Baring, a glass case full of ancient knick-knacks, probably family relics, two shelves of books near the bed, a cross, and then, on a little table respectfully isolated, an enormous Bible, which seems to fill the room and add to its severity. What a gulf all these objects disclose between the two human generations living under the same roof! A spacious well-appointed bathroom, with plenty of daylight, of course completes the installation.

Edith was anxious to show me the servants' quarters, rather out of patriotic pride, I fancy, for she has lived long enough in France to know that our servants are disgracefully lodged. At St. Olaf, there are three rooms for the domestics; the cook sleeps in one of them, the two maids in the second, and the third is unoccupied. The walls of these rooms are painted with enamel, and they gave me the impression of simplicity, but of dignity and wholesomeness. For each of the servants there is an iron bedstead, a wardrobe, a small chest of drawers, a table, two chairs, and a dressing-table. The dressing-table is considered absolutely necessary in England, and is to be found in the poorest houses. To my great satisfaction I saw various pretty trifles in these rooms, photographs, post cards, ribbon bows. In the cook's room there were pictures of the saints, some consecrated box-wood, and some flowers. Would any flowers be found in the miserable sleeping-dens allotted to our servants?

Miss Baring opened a little room adjoining, in which were taps of hot and cold water, and a bath.

"Their bathroom," she said smiling. "If we want clean servants we must supply them with the means of keeping clean."

Our neighbours have comprehended that it is their duty to facilitate hygiene for their domestics. Those who do this for the sake of their own health are more intelligent than we are, and those who do it out of kindness are more humane. On the same landing I saw the cistern and it seemed to me enormous. There is generally one in an English house and it makes the

daily bath possible. The basement of the house is fairly light, and the kitchen, the pantry, and the servants' sitting-room are all there. The kitchen cooking-stove seemed to me enormous, and in France so huge a one would only be found in a very large house. It is obviously a thing that takes up more room in English life than in ours. Its grate could roast a whole sheep, and its boiler supplies an abundant quantity of hot water. Meat roasted on the spit and the daily bath contribute largely to the health and strength of John Bull. The English cooking-stove should not be despised, but might rather be imported.

The sitting-room in which the domestics take their meals is quite a pleasant one. There are not many domestics at St. Olaf, and they would not suffice for the work if Mrs. Baring and Edith were not such good housekeepers. Besides the cook, there is a kitchenmaid for a few hours a day, a housemaid, and an under-housemaid. The under-housemaid attends to the cleaning and the housemaid to all that has to do with the dining-room. She does the work of a footman, serves at table, looks after the silver, and answers the door. A gardener comes two days a week and this suffices for keeping the garden and lawn in order, thanks to the excellent implements he has.

My friends' house, as indeed every house belonging to nice people in England, is cleaned and kept on very hygienic principles. Every day some rooms are thoroughly turned out and the beds are aired for a long time before they are made up again. On leaving one's bedroom, one leaves the door open, so that the air may circulate up and down stairs, and thus be promptly renewed. Our discoveries in France have revealed to the whole world the necessity of hygiene. The English apply it, at the cost of great sacrifices, but we have not yet gone farther than theory.

I looked at everything in the St. Olaf house with the same curiosity that a naturalist would have in studying a nest. In the nest and in the house, one can read the character and the habits, and even have a glimpse of the destiny of the bird

and of the man. And both in the nest and the house there is a soul. I was not long in realising what the St. Olaf one is like. It is the soul of a transition epoch, just on the verge of dividing into two, so to speak. It is very old, very rigid, and very narrow on the mother's side; modern, thirsting for freedom, and open to ideas on the children's side. It is like this now in most English families. It seems to me to be neither poetic, artistic, nor sentimental, but tender and human, refined through centuries of good education, well-born, in fact. Mrs. Baring and her daughter are ladies, the son is a gentleman. One can divine this by the things which surround them, by their way of living, their way of spending. A queen would feel at home with them and they would not be embarrassed by her presence. That is just the touch-stone.

St. Olaf.

Life in the St. Olaf home is uniform, but very comfortable. Economy is practised with regard to social amusements, dress, and extras, but not with regard to hygiene, outdoor sports, and hospitality. In a French family of the same position, the economy would be on these last three things.

At seven in the morning, a cup of tea serves as an alarum to rouse us from sleep. At half-past eight the breakfast gong is sounded. Mrs. Baring and Edith are carefully dressed when they appear in the dining-room, the former wearing a snow-white cap and a dress of woollen material, the latter in tailor costume. In English houses, matinées and dressing-gowns are not worn at table, and no one even goes downstairs in them. During breakfast the postman arrives. We look through our letters and papers and plan out the day's programme.

Directly after breakfast Rodney goes off on his cycle for the station, and then takes the train in order to get to his uncle's office. My friend then attends to her household duties, which she has taken upon herself in order to relieve her mother. In spite of her horror of all this, she goes through it with truly British conscientiousness. She attends to the plants and

the flowers in the house, and this alone is no small task; she decants the wine, goes down to the kitchen to inspect the larder, and arranges the menu with the terrible person who reigns in the basement. The tradespeople arrive, on horseback or cycle or driving. They receive their orders, hurry away again, and everything is sent in good time. The meat and bread are always weighed when they arrive. As the cooks do not buy the provisions here, there is no halfpenny in the shilling for them from the shops.

Mrs. Baring spends part of the morning giving her orders to the gardener and watching him carry them out. She then goes to the library, sees to the household accounts, writes her letters, reads the *Morning Post*, and then takes up her work, either knitting or sewing, destined for the poor. Edith goes out for her constitutional, either on foot or on her cycle, and twice a week on horseback. Luncheon is at half-past one, and in simple households this is rather a light meal. We each go up to our room then to rest a little and to make the change in our dress necessary for the afternoon programme: calls, garden parties, outdoor sports, or a walk. Towards half-past six, Rodney comes back from London, dresses as though he were going out to an evening party, except that he puts on a smoking-jacket instead of a dress-coat. I feel sure that he has never appeared at dinner in his own home in a morning coat or a travelling-suit. Mrs. Baring and Edith also wear semi-evening dress, and this all gives to the meal an elegance that lifts it above a simply animal function. Rodney brings the evening papers with him, the "latest Court and Town news." After dinner, coffee is served in the drawing-room, we play cards, and at about half-past ten Mrs. Baring retires. The brother and sister then finish the evening in the library, where Rodney smokes a pipe or a cigar and has a whiskey and soda. Edith knits those long bicycling stockings, that Englishwomen love to make, and they discuss politics and sports. As one mounts the social ladder from the middle rungs, the lines of life will be found to be less rigid and more brilliant. As one descends, the lines become more blurred, more indistinct, until they quite

disappear from sight in that frightful night of misery and vice, which in England is darker and more profound than anywhere else.

St. Olaf.

The French are convinced that the English have no family feeling, and the English think that we do not know what home is. Both these judgments are absolutely false and are a proof of the mutual ignorance of these two bad neighbours.

Family and home! It is in these two sacred things that the diversity of soul, sex, and destiny of the Saxon and Latin races manifests itself most thoroughly.

The Anglo-Saxons have, in a very marked degree, the love of race. For the improvement of race they spare nothing. They take special care of the young and make real sacrifices for them. Mothers suckle their children themselves whenever they can and watch carefully over their early education, always out of instinctive duty to the race. In the middle class, families live in the country or in the suburbs, so that the children may have plenty of air and space. Parents give up luxuries themselves, in order to provide their children with bicycles, ponies, everything connected with outdoor sport which can help in their physical development. Nothing is neglected so that they may not be in an inferior position. Children are brought up so that they may be prepared for life and its struggles, and this requires a certain severity and moral discipline, which we wrongly take for indifference.

On this side of the Channel, all the lines of demarcation are more distinct, wider, and the hierarchic spirit dominates, even in a family. The mother rarely becomes her children's friend. She would not have certain confidences from them and she would not touch on certain subjects, as this would put her on an equal footing with them. In life, as at table, she takes the top seat. Between parents and children, feelings are not exteriorised by caresses or words. They have less warmth than with us, but just as much depth, and there are beautiful instances of devotion and touching examples of self-sacrifice.

After a great deal of hesitation, I think I may venture to say that, in England, filial love is stronger than paternal or maternal love. In France it is just the contrary.

An Englishman has a very tender feeling for his mother. When he speaks to her, when he teases her in a gentle way, his eyes light up with a gleam of affection, his face takes a childlike expression which always delights me. The mother, on her side, has an open predilection for her sons. Sisters adore their brothers. The male represents the race, and an Englishwoman worships race. With every Britisher, there is a special instinct of protection for the women of his family.

Besides this, the love of outdoor sport creates a fraternal comradeship which is perfectly charming and which we do not know.

Between fathers and sons the bond is not so close in England as in France. On both sides there is more independence. They very soon treat each other as men and as equal strugglers.

English parents know, of course, how little likelihood there is of keeping their children with them. They are prepared for eventual separation, but when this takes place it is none the less painful. Some years ago I was at Southampton and saw a regiment starting for India, where war was then in progress. The farewells were abrupt, silent, and courageous; but such a wave of grief could be felt through everything that I, a foreigner, was moved to tears. The enormous mails that leave England laden with voluminous letters, on thin paper, written to the absent ones in all parts of the globe, fully prove the strength of the bond of relationship.

Have we more family feeling in France than our neighbours have? I doubt it. The English love the race in their children, the French love their children in the race. They love themselves above everything else in their children. They line the nest more softly in order to keep their young in it a longer time. They do not endeavour to prepare them for the struggle, but to spare them from it. From their birth the parents are busy paving the road for them. They endeavour to leave them as much money as possible, and for the sake of doing so

they economise on the things that are necessary for their well-being and their health. Instead of developing in them the energy that will carry them far, they develop in them the sensitiveness that will keep them at home. This kind of love lacks greatness, and is absolutely feminine in its forethought and puerile solicitude. With us, children and parents love each other thoroughly and heartily, and even passionately, but not very wisely. Familiarity has increased and respect decreased. Formerly parents only used the familiar "thou" when speaking to their children, and the children addressed their parents as "you," and this fixed the right, hierarchic line. I should like to see this re-established. Among the aristocracy, an old custom has been kept up and the son still kisses his mother's hand.

In the rigid atmosphere of the English family, the character is elaborated; whilst in the tender atmosphere of the French family, the soul is elaborated. Are not the character and the soul the two motive forces of our respective destinies?

If you ask an Englishman which is the most beautiful word in his language, he will reply without hesitation "home."

For him the word home is country, haven of refuge, heaven. "He has gone home," is the expression sometimes used when anyone has just died. Home! It is also the family nest, the inviolable shelter, the protecting roof, the house with a staircase that outsiders do not mount, and no matter how humble this house may be, John Bull worships it. In the little red brick cottages, joined together like the cells of a honeycomb, just as in the stately castle, shoes are changed and some attempt at dressing is made, before sitting down to the family table. The daughters tie up their hair with bright ribbons, or put on some ornament that is hideous, but at the same time touching on account of the good intention. The mother changes her dress "before the boys come home," and the boys find her in her tidiest gown. This picture of their home, made cheerful in this way, stamps itself on some cell of their brain and they take it away with them to the other end of the world, so that

when Tommy Atkins dies on a distant battle-field, his mother's white cap and his sister's pink or blue bows stand out like bright spots in his dying visions, and bring a last smile to his lips.

On account of the mission that he has to carry out down here, the Englishman is eminently transplantable. With a roof over his head and walls within which to enclose his life, he takes root in all latitudes. In a tent, a bungalow, a colonial house, he lives as much as possible as he would in England. He establishes the same customs, the same domestic rites. His native land is very dear to him, he talks of it always with pride, returns to it as a visitor, but in the end he comes to look on it as a kind of ancestor and calls it "the old country." The place where he has his home becomes his country, and will be his children's country.

The Britishers who see Frenchmen seated outside our cafés are convinced that we do not know what home is. It seems to me that this is generalising rather too much.

What we call the *chez soi* is certainly less than home, but the *foyer* is still more than home. The *foyer!* How can we describe that abstract thing, composed of invisible forces, which holds us and draws us back to it and which is so dear to us. One may have a home but not a *foyer*. The humblest dwelling may be a *foyer* and the millionaire's palace may not be one. The threshold of the *foyer* is more sacred than that of the home. The *foyer* cannot be improvised, cannot be reconstructed, and it must also rest on the soil of one's country. It is a centre of warmth and light created by love, friendship, devotion, the union of hearts and mind. All this is what we have. The home is Anglo-Saxon, the *foyer* is Latin.

St. Olaf.

Mrs. Baring inspires me with ever-increasing admiration. At Monte Carlo she gave me the impression of a very well-bred and very distinguished woman, but of average intelligence. Here, in this house, where I see her work and feel her influence, she appears to me quite a different person. She is no longer

the British matron, a most exasperating type of humanity, but the English mother and a lady combined.

Her husband, a younger son of good family, with all the expensive tastes allowable only in the elder son, had endeavoured to make money on the turf and had not succeeded. After his death, half ruined, she had retired to Wimbledon to live quietly there with her three children. Through special circumstances she had been able to buy St. Olaf for a ridiculously low sum. She had then partially rebuilt it and made of it the charming place that it now is. With great economy, and at the cost of many personal sacrifices, she had managed to give her two sons and her daughter an education in accordance with their birth. She had rowed her little boat along with skilful, steady strokes. She never raises her voice, her dress has no rustle of silk, her light step is noiseless, and yet she fills the whole house, one looks for her in every room, and one feels instinctively that she is a force. If Miss John Bull's chignon is characteristic, Mrs. John Bull's cap is still more so. The English "cap" is a scrap of muslin and lace that women of various stations in life, servants and ladies of a certain age, place on the top of their heads. The "cap" has for me the symbolical effect of an extinguisher. As a matter of fact, it always does extinguish something, either liberty or youth. There are caps that express good humour, kindliness, a gay disposition. There are some that are aggressively bourgeois and represent "cant." Those of my hostess give me an impression of elegance, innate refinement, kindness, but also of unalterable opinions. They are above all "county" caps. For French people this term requires explanation. In England county families are those who own inalienable land, *fidéicommis*. They are not members of the aristocracy, but they entertain and are entertained by the aristocracy. Some of these families have been living on their estates for centuries and are of better birth and older race than many of the present peers of the realm. It is less easy for them to come down than for other classes of society. The men are frequently great drinkers, great sportsmen, and much besides. The women have the opposite virtues and this makes the average right as far as respecta-

bility is concerned, and keeps up the domestic equilibrium. In county families there is still a fine coating of ignorance. The mentality there is more substantial than brilliant. The straightforward, ready-witted character has a certain roughness. There is a curious mixture of aristocratic pride, of rustic good humour, and of provincial small-mindedness. With my hosts I am constantly discovering in various degrees the faults and qualities peculiar to the English landed gentry. Mrs. Baring belongs essentially to the "county family" category, and her caps allow of no mistake. No matter, under those caps are bandeaux of fine silky hair, slightly wavy and almost white, very animated brown eyes, a charming face to look at.

She is very particular about her toilette—quite coquettish even. Her semi-low evening dresses are trimmed with old lace, and round her neck she wears a broad band of ribbon velvet with ancient jewellery fixed to it. At the head of her table she looks very dignified. Like the majority of Englishwomen, it is there that she shows up to the best advantage. She has paid frequent visits to the Continent and that has taken away much of her British stiffness. While her sons were at Cambridge, she let St. Olaf and spent three or four months at a time in Italy and in Switzerland. At present, whenever she manages to save a certain sum of money she takes Edith to the South of France for a change, and is always delighted to have this change herself. She still takes an interest in many things, and particularly in politics. She also keeps up with all that goes on in society and in the world of sport. She is a staunch Conservative and rabidly patriotic. She deplores Free Trade, and has a horror of the Germans, because they flood the markets with their wares. She is disturbed in her mind about the invasion of foreign workmen and the invasion of the French religious congregations. Like most Englishwomen of her class and age, she is afraid lest there should not be enough ground left for the feet of the nation.

Seated at the family table, I realise the progress of ideas in England during the last twenty-five years. This progress is immense. Between Mrs. Baring and her children there is a whole

century. When one or the other makes some observation that shocks her she does not attempt to argue it out, but merely answers it with a reproving silence more eloquent than words.

I have noticed something which is very curious. Edith, impelled by her very modern mind, endeavours instinctively to put a little movement into the arrangement of the furniture, the knick-knacks, and even into the writing-table appointments. She moves an arm-chair away from the wall, and places the pens and pencils perhaps in a slanting position. Mrs. Baring comes in, and she, faithful to the ideas of yore, with her delicate but strong fingers, puts everything back again in a straight line. These two absolutely psychological movements, which are constantly being repeated and which are almost reflex, seem to me most striking. That of Mrs. Baring represents for me a counterpoise, the counterpoise that the preceding generation has to exercise over the one that follows it, perhaps. As for me, my dream is of parents pointing out the way and walking on ahead.

Although my hostess is rather cold than otherwise, there is a deep current of affection between her and her children. Rodney teases her in a very droll way. He often calls her "Mater," and he puts a caressing tone into this word, which doubtless neither escapes her ear nor yet her heart. He might have his own flat in London; it is solely for her that he lives at Wimbledon. An Englishman always has a special affection for his widowed mother, an affection in which there is an instinct of protection.

I hear with great pleasure that, on the death of a first cousin, Mrs. Baring will come into a fortune. She is the last member of an old Somersetshire family, the Wilkes of Loftshall, and, as the male line is extinct, the land in trust will come into her possession. Edith owned to me that when she was a girl she had been grievously haunted by the longing for this inheritance, and that every morning, on opening her newspapers, she used to hurry to the death column with the hope of finding the name of Thomas Wilkes.

"It was abominable," she added with her nervous smile; "but at that time money would have brought me so much happiness, or at least I thought so. At present I do not long for it any more, except for my mother. I should like her to be able to have some enjoyment from it before she dies. I should like her to have her carriage, go for long drives, and to absorb plenty of fresh air. That would prolong her life, I am quite sure. As for me, I have no other ambition now than to buy Dick, the old thoroughbred that I ride. He is getting terribly the worse for wear, and it would be a great joy to me to let him have green meadows and the open space for which his horse's soul is perhaps always longing."

Since I have known all that, the sight of Mrs. Baring adding up her pounds, shillings, and pence seems to me pathetic, and I cannot help hoping that the Squire of Loftshall, who is seventy-five or seventy-six years of age, will not delay too long before going to join his ancestors.

St. Olaf.

The need of a change and the instinct of hospitality are the most remarkable characteristics of our neighbours, those which make them most unlike us. They must change their clothes, change rooms, and have a change of air, of house, and of country. These changes are probably necessary to their race. Nature obtains them by means of vanity, snobbishness, of a special intuition for hygiene. Unless English people are very poor, they will not keep the same clothes and the same shoes on all day. The middle-class woman likes to have a morning room in which she can stay until lunch time, and English architects find a way of arranging for this room in the most modest of cottages.

In England, from morning to night, and no doubt from night to morning, the verb "to need a change" is conjugated at all times and by all people. "I need a change, you need a change, he needs a change, etc." This phrase, which comes into every conversation, used, for a long time, to get on my nerves. It is now a most interesting revelation to me.

The English are an insular people; consequently they are not self-sufficient, either materially or intellectually. The ocean, which surrounds them on all sides, excites within them, in the long run, the sensation of being imprisoned and the longing to escape. Besides this, their low skies, the want of light, and the uniformity of lines engender a most depressing monotony. This monotony is the goad which drives them away from their own country. They then go about all over the world in search of light, of natural or artistic beauty, and they never return to their own island with their horn empty. Without knowing it, they bring back elements that are necessary for the very soul of their country. If they could only realise what they owe to other nations, to the Orient, to Italy, and to France, to those Latin races above all which frequently provoke a little contemptuous smile from them, they would have the most intense reverence for them. They are not yet aware of this, that is all!

This need of moving about, with which English people are more and more possessed, has still another cause.

However comfortable and however luxurious the English home may be, it is always cold. Their snobbish decorum insists on a discipline which is too strict and too uniform. It puts a damper on gaiety, it makes conversation heavy and commonplace, it prevents the exteriorisation of the sentiments and transforms the domestics into automata. This atmosphere, in which good, exhilarating fluids are lacking, those which open the minds and the hearts, causes a sort of oppression, of nervous state, for which our neighbours know no other remedy than change of place. Thanks to the mania for hospitality which distinguishes them they can always have recourse to this and they take advantage of it.

They provide a change for their relatives, for their friends, for mere acquaintances. The woman of the lower middle class has her list of visitors, just as the lady of the manor does. In the cottage, and under the farmhouse roof, there is always the guest chamber, and it is rarely empty. Plenty of girls are away for months without returning to the paternal roof.

There are people who literally pass their lives in each other's houses, and families which are never alone.

In England, hospitality seems to be absolutely obligatory, consequently very commonplace, and almost mathematical in its action. It is given and received with a simplicity which makes it possible to everyone. The guest enters the home circle of his host and that circle neither accelerates nor slackens its movements for the guest. He shares either luxury or mediocrity, as the case may be, savoury roast beef or economical stew, costly or cheap diversions. In return, very little is exacted from him. He is neither asked to be very amusing nor very brilliant, but simply to increase the number, and, provided that he be correct in matters of etiquette and toilet, he will give satisfaction.

This institution of hospitality keeps up domestic discipline, helps in the formation of character by the self-government that it requires. It gives Englishwomen a considerable amount of occupation. They usually like this rôle of hostess, which ensures them homage and consideration, and confers on them a veritable power. The middle-class woman is compelled to do more herself than the great lady, but she has all the more satisfaction. She feels real pleasure in preparing the room of this or that guest, in decorating her house, and she is delighted to show off her house linen and her silver. At the head of her table, either prettily or richly gowned in the evening, with guests on her right hand and on her left, she feels that she is someone, and that sensation is always agreeable. She loves, too, the excitement of the arrivals and departures, the letters of thanks, full of compliments more or less sincere. All this animates or cheers up life for her.

As to the English husband, he does not kick against the social obligation. He is accustomed to leaving his worries and his business outside the house, he always has time to say something agreeable or disagreeable to his wife, and he likes to drink his wine in company.

It is from this need of change, this need of moving about, that the week-end custom has sprung. The holiday from Satur-

day afternoon to Monday morning, which our neighbours so wisely allow themselves, is always known by this term. It was formerly the exclusive privilege of the workers, but it has now come into fashion among society people, and they make use of it for varying their amusements. Even the King takes his "week-end," and I am not sure but that he has just as much right to it as the most laborious of his subjects. The little locomotive which serves to pilot and neutralise the way for him is often to be seen rushing along, and on looking at Buckingham Palace it is easy to imagine with what pleasure he must escape from it.

The "week-end" of society people is something very special. It ought to have a monograph written upon it, signed by a Thackeray or by one of the great satirical whips. What an exaggeration of vanity, of snobbishness, and of ambition it causes! At no matter what cost, either at home or at the homes of others, the "week-end" must be brilliant and *chic*. An invitation is fished for for weeks and gloried in for months. It is a sort of social label.

The younger men like to take a certain lady of their acquaintance to Paris, and older men take the mistress whom they are concealing in the London suburbs. They are to be met under the arcades of the Rue de Rivoli, at the races, in the tea-rooms, and in the *cafés-concerts*. They look awkward and ashamed, as all Englishmen do when they have broken with respectability. Whenever I meet these runaway couples, I say to myself they are having a "week-end," and I say it in English, as the French word does not render this essentially English institution.

These thirty-six hours at the end of the week produce a formidable ebullition of life, and we may rest assured that it is more especially the devil who helps it on, not only with the good old faggots of old, but with methylated spirits and petroleum.

On Saturday afternoons and Monday mornings, there is a hurrying to and fro of individuals over the whole surface of the Unknown Isle, which would be absolutely incomprehensible

to a *savant* from Mars or Jupiter, entrusted with the mission of studying the inhabitants of our planet. I myself am only just beginning to realise that all these creatures, some of them driving along in a machine with wheels, their valise or trunks over their heads, others stepping into a railway train or on to a boat, are merely agents of life being guided, without any choice in the matter, in different directions, that they are entrusted with transmitting messages, taking with them words of peace or of discord destined to unite or disunite, as the case may be. Yes, I realise this now, and at times very thoroughly. I then watch them with amazement. Insignificant novelist as I am, a novelist who can scarcely hold the threads for a few personages, I feel an immense admiration for the powers that combine all these movements, and, quite bewildered, I keep repeating to myself "How is it done?" When I am struck by the face of a man or woman through a cab window, I wonder whether this is a malevolent agent or a beneficent agent, and I should like to see farther. It is, nevertheless, a fine thing to be able to see at all, and we ought to be grateful for that. I know at least that this famous, upsetting, society "week-end" is one of the means employed by Nature for accelerating exchanges with our neighbours, and it does accelerate them, there is no doubt about it!

The English are refreshed by travelling, hospitality, and eternal change. We are refreshed on the spot, so to speak.

Our situation as Continental people puts us in immediate contact with the great currents of Art and of Thought. Intuition, that divine faculty with which our race is supplied, often reveals to us what our eyes do not see and what our ears do not hear. Everything seems to be arranged for making a sedentary people of us.

Our country, bathed in brilliant light, is admirably varied; between it and us there is very close communion. We do not find anywhere else the elements which suit us, and so we stay in our country, or at any rate we always return to it.

Besides this, in our homes, no matter how humble they may be, there is always gaiety, the unexpected, a fine exuberance

of life. We talk freely there, we discuss every imaginable subject. That creates an intimacy which holds us. We are self-sufficing, hence our egoism and our exclusiveness.

No one ever praises French hospitality, and for a good reason. In towns we prefer living, not in separate houses, but on shelves, an arrangement which is no more favourable to hospitality than to reproduction. Space is measured out to us too scantily to allow of our having guests. As everywhere else, rich people, owners of country houses, fill their huge dwellings with friends and acquaintances. They give hunting and dinner parties most freely and generously. In the middle class, though, there is little entertainment, except for near relatives. People living in the provinces shut up the rooms they do not use. It would not occur to them to invite a few city friends to come for a change to their more peaceful part of the world and to breathe fresher air for a time. We do not yet realise the immense benefit of a change of place and of associations. We do not even know how to offer and accept hospitality in a simple fashion. All that has not been born in us. This is a Natural History fact.

With our temperament, the ceaseless hospitality practised in England would be intolerable to us. The bare idea amuses me of the state of mind of a French husband if he had to put up with such a thing. As a rule he is nervous, impulsive, and not well disciplined. If he found guests at his fireside, coming between himself and his wife, obliging him to a certain restraint, he would simply go wild.

The Englishman puts on a dress-coat at home, and the Frenchman is in shirt sleeves, figuratively speaking. The latter is accustomed to planting his burden of worries and trouble on the middle of the table at home. The presence of strangers would, therefore, inconvenience him and he is not accustomed to being inconvenienced. John Bull receives you under his roof, but he does not admit you into close intimacy. If Madame la France opens her house to you she feels obliged to open her heart too, and she keeps the key of that more jealously than is generally imagined.

Our way of living and of feeling produces a more intense concentration, and it is this very concentration which gives to our soul its prodigious force of diffusion and of radiation.

I wonder whether I have divined just a few of the causes and effects of the movements peculiar to our neighbours and to us. Alas, we always imagine that we have discovered the truth. Like children in a certain game, we cry out triumphantly: "I am burning"; and a mocking voice answers: "No, you are quite cold, freezing, in fact."

St. Olaf.

MRS. BARING and her daughter evidently wanted me to have a change. That, I am sure, is the very English idea which induced them to invite me, and I must own that it was a good one. I feel quite revived by the very novelty of everything around me and by the interest and curiosity that all this has awakened in my mind.

As I am a foreigner, my breakfast is sent up to me in my room. At eight o'clock precisely, the maid brings me hot water and a tray on which is my tea, and some hot, buttered toast.

From my open window I look out on to that rich English verdure which seems to make silence and peace, and I watch the birds pecking on the lawn. I like to feel the contrast of this and London, the gigantic furnace so near. Sometimes I listen attentively, and am surprised not to hear the crackling sound of its life.

Every morning I go out for a walk, and, as Edith had heard me say at Monte Carlo that in order to get into touch with people and things I had to be alone, she always refuses to accompany me. Sometimes I happen to meet her when she is out cycling, and she dismounts and walks home with me, and then I tell her of my discoveries and impressions. When she goes out on horseback I always arrange to meet her for the pure pleasure of seeing a fine specimen of horsemanship. She rides admirably, and is a born horsewoman.

I did not know any of these suburban towns, which are so many excrescences of the metropolis, excrescences which con-

tain as many as thirty, forty, and fifty thousand inhabitants. Wimbledon is a pretty place, and is gradually getting very much in vogue. Its society is made up of business men, retired officers, independent people, widows, old maids, and any amount of unmarried ladies. It is an eminently respectable place. There are no little wine-shops and no restaurants for revellers, as there would be in the suburbs of Paris. On a level with the station are the business streets with very good shops. The footpaths, crowded with an incredible number of nurses and babies, give an idea of the population. Wide, up-hill roads, with small houses and villas on either side, lead to a sort of plateau, where the better part of the town is built, and to what is known as "the Common."

Wimbledon Common is supposed to be one of the natural beauties of England. I remember seeing engravings of it when I was young. At first sight there seems to be nothing to justify its reputation. It is an immense piece of ground reaching as far as Putney, but it is very bare and flat, with roads and narrow paths crossing it. Thick grass grows over it, heather and a few groups of trees. Its landmarks, in the horizon, are a church spire, the sails of a wind-mill, the golf links, and a kind of pool. The Common has a peculiar charm, of which one never tires. Thanks, I suppose, to an imperceptible convexity, carriages, horses, and their riders disappear in the most wonderful way. Then, too, the elasticity of its turf makes one lose all idea of time. After walking, as one thinks, for five minutes, one suddenly discovers that the starting-place is an enormous distance away. Various effects of light and perspective, the wind sweeping it incessantly, and the mist throwing its veil over it, make it as changing as the sea. At times, it appears infinite and desolate, and then all at once it is gay and has a strange, wild, mysterious beauty of its own. It lends itself to legends, to fantastic stories. No one certainly would care to cross it at night. This piece of land originally belonged to Lord Spencer, and, when he was about to sell it for building purposes, Wimbledon and Putney bought it for the sake of keeping the open space. The inhabitants of the two places pay

an extra annual tax until the debt is discharged. Never could any money have been spent more intelligently, for this open space, where the sea air comes through a cut in the hills of Brighton, serves as lungs for the little neighbouring towns and even for London. The Common was formerly used for military manœuvres; it is now given up to the people as a public promenade, children play there, and, on Saturday afternoons, workers in the city encamp there with their various outdoor sports.

Wimbledon has specimens of every kind of suburban dwelling. In the lower town there are rows of workmen's cottages, with a small garden in front and a little yard behind. Then there are rows of other houses, grey and red. These have only four rooms, are all joined together, and look as though they have been cut out with a punch and placed there. Each one has a tiny garden, the windows are clean and finished with very white short curtains. There are occasionally a few flowers in the window, and this testifies to an aspiration towards beauty.

Then come some very modest-looking houses, built in twos and threes, with a cellar, a garden gate, a grass plot, and a few shrubs. To the right and left are wide roads and on the plateau itself are villas of all descriptions, separated from each other by hedges and trees. These have gardens of different sizes, lawns, and tennis courts. Some of them are covered with ivy, with Virginian creeper and clematis, and all are luxurious with flowers. The more modern ones testify to that increasing need of light and air which the human being feels. They seem to be all windows and bay-windows. On the green roads which skirt the Common, on the way to London, there are some real country houses, some very fine estates even, one of which, "Belmont," belongs to the Duc d'Alençon.

I have never seen so many varieties of human dwellings together before. Each one has a special character, a character such as the French flat could never have. I enjoy studying them during my morning walk, and I am curiously affected by their inner life. Certain ones make me feel suddenly bored, they

give me the chill of that monotony born of narrow-minded Puritanism. Others look dry and hard, of old-maidish aspect, and make one think of the sadness of lonely maturity. Many of them, on the other hand, communicate an agreeable sensation of simple happiness, of restful freshness. There is one just where the Common begins, which is a mass of brilliant flowers. There is evidently a love affair there. As a rule, they all give me an impression of mediocrity, of an existence with great restrictions. Since I have begun to know how to read life, the human habitation has become of great importance in my eyes. It seems to me as sacred as a temple and it really is a temple. Is not the mystery of the incarnation repeated there over and over again? Are not conception, birth, death, the inevitable rites of Nature, accomplished there every day? Do not the walls shelter the great Invisibles, love, passion, joy, grief? The dwellings of the humble inspire me with affectionate respect. I wish they could all be wholesome, clean, and sunny. Is it not often over such homes that the Shepherd's Star stops? Do we not get from such homes savants, artists, poets, men destined to raise humanity, to enrich the world with light, beauty, and hope? This morning, as I was walking slowly along, I felt that, and the suburban cottages, houses, and villas all seemed interesting to me. My mind does not always rise to this, far from it. It very often drags along on a dead level with the earth. When it soars for a moment, when it mounts like a balloon I like to remember its impressions and to write them down. Aeronauts have the same desire.

It is not only the Wimbledon houses that attract my attention, but its pictures of English life, of simple outdoor life. In France, where the duty of the daily walk is an unknown thing, a town of this category would be mortally dull. Women and girls would not be seen. Here they create a gay atmosphere. Some of them, dressed in tailor costumes, and accompanied by one or several dogs, walk at a rapid rate, as though taking exercise for the sake of their health. Others, with little note-books in their hands, are on the way to settle the

weekly accounts with the tradespeople. Then there are young girls out riding without any escort at all, pony and donkey-carriages full of children, with their pretty hair tossed about by the wind. Such carriages are generally followed by large collies, or excited little terriers. Then, too, there are cyclists of every category skimming along, the women with their light sleeves fluttering prettily in the breeze. The rage for this kind of locomotion is now over, but the Englishwoman is certainly the only one who can ride a bicycle gracefully. The Frenchwoman imagined at first that she had discovered, in her cycle, a fresh means of coquetry, but she was not long in perceiving that her figure was not slender enough for her to appear to advantage when riding, and she soon gave it up. The practical Anglo-Saxon woman has made an instrument of utility and of exercise of her cycle, and above all of liberty. She has been criticised for using it, for putting too great a distance between herself and the house of her father or husband. It is a fact that the bicycle has greatly contributed to her emancipation, that emancipation which moralists are continually deploring.

English people never really look what we call English, except on the Continent. In their own country they never give me an impression of eccentricity, and if I saw them going out in tights it would not shock me. Yesterday, I met a girl cycling, with a hat on such as is worn in certain men's and women's colleges. It was of an odd shape, a sort of black silk cap put on to a large square of black. If I had met a cyclist in France wearing such a head-gear, I should have thought her ridiculous; but here she did not even astonish me. She rode well, and I thought her charming in her dark cloth costume, so that I even turned round to watch her out of sight. All this gives me an impression of gay, wholesome activity, and I should like to see the same thing in our provincial towns and in the country. I often wonder whether we shall ever have it. I am convinced that we shall.

This morning the weather was absolutely divine, and I had the sensation that the spring had reached its very greatest

perfection of beauty. The air could not have been sweeter and more balmy, nor the flowers more beautiful. To-morrow I am sure there will be a diminution of all this. Here I am, going up like a balloon again. It is no doubt the effect of spring on an old woman.

St. Olaf.

It is impossible to study English life without noticing the important place given to animals in it, and the characteristic way in which they are brought up.

At St. Olaf there is Jack, an Irish terrier; Bob, a French poodle, and Lord, a big black cat with white feet. With their wonderful instinct, they at once recognised in me a friend. When the two dogs see me ready to go out, they come and ask me plainly to take them with me, and I take them. I never could resist that dumb petition of the dog, with his soul in his eyes. Thanks to this weakness of mine, during the whole season at Vichy, I used to take out, not only the hotel proprietor's dog, but one of the dog's chums, an awful little mongrel, that he called as we went by. No matter what I wanted to do, those two dogs compelled me to take them to the banks of the Allier and kept me employed throwing stones into the river for them. Oh, that tyranny of the weak, there is nothing more irresistible.

Jack and Bob are my delight, and all the more so as each one is a living illustration of the English and French character. Although of Irish race, Jack has been educated in England, as his ancestors were before him, and he has nothing Celtic about him except his rough coat and the profound expression in his eyes. Admirably well formed, and with superb muscles and frame, he is cold, dignified, and nervous, like a true Anglo-Saxon. When he is pleased to see anyone, his upper lip turns back with a kind of smile. His instinct is very clearly opposed to rabbits and rats. During our walks, he frequently commits "raticide," and he brings the victim back triumphantly between his teeth.

Bob, on the other hand, is very French. Everyone says so at St. Olaf, and Miss Baring assures me that she likes him be-

cause of that. He is an absolutely thoroughbred poodle, but he has not been shorn like a lion, after the fashion of his French brothers, and he neither wears moustaches nor cuffs. He has been left just as Nature made him. He has a fluffy tail, a soft, bright, curly coat, very round gold-coloured eyes, such as I have never before seen. Altogether he looks like a young bear, and is irresistibly droll. He is overflowing with canine life, joy, and affection. When we are out together, he keeps coming back all the time to tell me something. He is interested in everything. With his india-rubber ball in his mouth, he chases everything that flies, forgetting that he has no wings. Then when the butterflies have escaped him, he watches them with a look of consternation in his eyes, which would be comic if he were not so human in his disappointment. There certainly is a ray of the Latin soul in him; it is impossible not to recognise it.

Jack and Bob are not only gentlemen by birth, but also by education. This assertion may appear a little strong, and yet there is nothing exaggerated about it.

In France, people who like dogs become their slaves. They allow them to invade the house entirely, and they spoil them outrageously. Outdoors, they keep turning round to see what the dogs are doing, and the latter do just as they like. They are fed in the most absurd way and crammed with dainties. By way of trying to make them happy, their owners shorten their life for them. With an English master, a fox-terrier is a delightful companion. He is a little rough, perhaps, not at all sentimental, but strong, active, intrepid, and obedient. He is glossy with health, and he always keeps in good form. With a French master he undergoes a curious transformation. His movements and his disposition become considerably gentler. He is more affectionate, but on the other hand he obeys badly or sometimes not at all. His coat loses its brilliancy, and he soon gets puffy. There is some truth in the proverb: Like master, like dog.

The English understand loving their children and animals better than we do. They raise the latter up to themselves

by disciplining and educating them, and animals are perfectly capable of education. They learn to know their place, to realise, in a certain way, their dignity, and they get a sort of Union Jack air, like their masters. There is no dog so correct as the English dog. When he scratches himself in the drawing-room, or rolls over on his back, he is reminded that this is not proper behaviour. "Manners, sir," or "behave like a gentleman, sir," says his master, and the dog is on his four paws in a second.

French parents are rather inclined to inspire their children with fear and distrust of animals. English parents teach their children to love them. There are always some around the cradles and in the nurseries. Between these animals and the little human beings there is a wonderful and most touching understanding. This accounts for that need of canine affection peculiar to most Britishers which Americans do not have. I often used to see King Edward VII, when he was Prince of Wales and staying at the Hotel Bristol, take his dog out for its walk in the morning round the Place Vendôme just like any ordinary mortal.

At Cannes, I used to admire the patience of an English Colonel, Sir James Brett. Every day he was to be seen taking out a frightful old, blind, deaf, asthmatical bull-dog, for a walk round the hotel grounds. He used to put the end of his stick against the animal's side and walk very slowly. A blind dog out with its master is a thing not often seen, and it certainly was very touching.

A few years ago there was an epidemic of rabies in England, which necessitated very stringent measures. Dogs found straying in the streets without muzzles, were destroyed by the police. This has brought about a remarkable amelioration in the canine race, thanks to the selection thus exercised. Nature, too, has been greatly seconded by vanity and snobbishness. There have been many more dog shows, and it is now considered the thing to exhibit and to own prize dogs. Lady S——, for instance, has a reputation for possessing the finest collies and Lady B——'s terriers are famous. Another

woman has undertaken to save a certain race threatened with extinction, such as the pug-dogs, and still another has brought the French bull-dog into favour, so that this has now dethroned the poodle. If some leader of that Society which is spelt with a capital S were to discover our little cur, which is so amusing and impulsive, with its expressive face of which one never tires, it would be all over with him. The poor little animal would become quite the fashion, and would even, perhaps, be transformed into a distinguished dog. Under English discipline, he would lose his gaiety, his individuality, and in the depths of his expressive, mischievous, but affectionate eyes, there would be a yearning for the street, a longing for a certain ill-smelling rubbish-box, perhaps, just as in the eyes of a collie there is the longing for the mountains and green pastures. May Heaven preserve our cur from distinction! I fancy I can make my mind easy, as such an honour or indignity will probably be spared him.

In our dogs we look for intelligence and strong affection before anything else. Our neighbours only require good points, as regards race. They have a perfect worship of race, and yet they are the people who most easily make *mésalliances*. An Englishman who would only ride a thoroughbred, and who would not be seen out with a mongrel dog, would marry a barmaid, or a third-rate actress. An Englishwoman who must have dogs of absolutely pure breed might marry her coachman. In England, at present, there is a better record as regards race in the stud-book than in the peerage. Such is evidently the will of the humorous gods!

One does not have to live long in the Unknown Isle before discovering that the humanitarian movement and the movement of humanity in favour of animals have received a decided impetus. Woman has been the principal agent in this progress, and all honour is due to her for it.

When I meet our beautiful Perche horses, and see how coquettishly they are harnessed, I congratulate them inwardly for having fallen into the hands of men who know how to make use of animal strength, and how to economise it. The glossy

coat and the fine pace of the London horses is a proof of this. In this country the horse is someone, and those who do not believe in its intelligence should come and study it under the better conditions that are made for it. It distinguishes between right and left, knows the road and the laws of the road. It is fully aware that it is working for man, and it works with pleasure.

The Englishman has retained much of his primitive roughness. One does not have to scratch very deeply before finding the brute in him, and yet he is not cruel. He is a born sportsman, and the true sportsman has a horror of cruelty. He has hunting in the blood, and he is one of the most active agents in the great *battues* instituted by Nature for thinning the ranks of certain species. Consequently the Englishman loves to kill, but he kills fairly. There used to be men in England who delighted in dog, rat, and cockfighting, and there are probably still a few of them. Such men are the retrogressive ones, those in whom a passion for betting, the use of alcohol, or overeating has developed their worst instincts. The difficulties in the way of indulging in these pastimes, worthy of savages, have considerably lessened their number. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals keeps a watch over them and this society is not one in name only. It is always on the lookout, always active, and always vigilant. For the good fight it is waging for the helpless and defenceless, it is an honour to itself, and still more an honour to England.

To my great regret, I must acknowledge that animals are happier with the Saxon race, and indeed in all Protestant countries, than they are with us Latins and in Catholic countries generally. In my opinion, this is the priest's fault. For centuries he has been teaching and moulding the mind of the peasant, of the man of the people, and it has never occurred to him to try to awaken his interest and his affection for the humble collaborators of our life. He has never, either in the pulpit or in the confessional, insisted on kindness to them being a duty. And yet Jesus was born in the stable. What a point that might have been for the priest! St. Francis of

Assisi has left no school with his theology of love and fraternity. Is the priest afraid of letting it be imagined that these humble creatures have a soul? That would, perhaps, have been enough to make the tight-rope along which he walks give way slightly. He was afraid, and then, too, he knows nothing of animals. His very awkwardness and timidity in stroking a dog or a cat is a somewhat painful revelation. The result is that in countries where the Catholic Church has kept the greatest influence, animals are least understood and more ill-treated than elsewhere. Spain is a proof of this. Her soul and her very flesh are marked with the bull-fight so that it is not exactly a breeze of humanity that is wafted to us over the Pyrenees. The breeze that comes to us does us harm and the places over which it blows give us a proof of this, as they, too, have their bull-fights. In Paris, even, we have the "Fête of the Fat Cow," and not long ago it was proposed that at the end of that fête there should be music played in the square by the slaughter house. A *bamboula* of that kind would be very much like those of the Congo.

In Paris, too, alas! there is the lamentable appearance of our horses. This is a veritable black spot on the brilliant picture of Parisian life, and the various embellishments thought out for our public monuments will not make up for such a blemish. It is remarked on by all foreigners, and it rouses the indignation of sportsmen. I am constantly hearing reproaches on this subject which humiliate me. The other day an American said to me bluntly:

"As Paris has so much brilliancy, why does it not put a little on the backs of its horses?" From the hall of the hotel where I live, I see every day the pitiful procession of these creatures which are working for us. Their dull coats, their tired look, their meagre outlines fill my heart with shame and sorrow. I cannot even watch them long, for the sight reveals too much suffering on the part of the animal and too much greed, ignorance, and indifference in the man.

Will the time ever come on earth when there will be no more hunting parties, no more horse-racing, no more war? Will

there ever come a time when the stag and the fox will no longer be the food of vanity, the horse the food of Paris, and mankind the food of cannons? Will there be a time when Nature will kill quickly and mercifully, when there will be less suffering for men and animals? I firmly believe so. The forces which we are obeying and seconding seem to be working to this end. Let us work hard then with these forces, and, in the meantime, the degree of civilisation can be reckoned by the degree of humanity towards animals.

St. Olaf.

English people always associate the French with the Pope, just as French people associate the English with the Bible.

The Bible, what an accumulator! It has armed thousands of creatures against each other, it has lighted stake fires, killed as surely as the bomb and caused ferocious hatred. It has also vivified like the sun, brought about superhuman self-sacrifice and devotion, and created centres of love and affection. It has sent, and it still sends, men and women to their death. It has been a gift of anger and of pity. I do not think I am mistaken in saying that it is one of Nature's secret agents, the most formidable of the invisible powers contained within the smallest volume. Ever since I have been capable of realising all this, I touch it with respect mingled with awe.

The Bible is certainly the corner stone of the British Empire. It ought to figure in its arms, between the lion and the unicorn. It is to be found everywhere. One day in London I had missed a train and had to wait several hours in the drawing-room of the Great Western Hotel. There were only three books to look at, and, strangely enough, they represented the three great forces of the nation. The three books were "The Shipping Annual," "The Trade Annual," and the Bible. In France, we should not find the Bible in one of our terminus hotels. The Frenchman does not know the Bible. To him it is suggestive of narrow-minded Puritanism, moroseness, and physical ugliness. He has never looked for the Word of God in it, and it is always a sealed book to him. The Englishman,

on the contrary, finds all kinds of consolation, promises, and hopes in it. As a child he was brought up to love and reverence it. He used to see his mother's face become grave when she opened it, and words which he did not understand caused a strange silence. All this made a lasting impression of awe mingled with respect on him. Before he could read, he had longed to have a copy, and when he did possess one, it seemed to increase his importance and his little hand clasped it as though it were a treasure. The giving away of Bibles, practised so indefatigably by our neighbours, has always excited our jeers, and yet there is something in that book of the sacred poets which cannot be analysed, an inspiration, a mysterious power destined to act on certain minds as a force and a curb. From its enigmatical words, and its incomprehensible phrases, a certain sweetness and light seem to emanate for the simplest minds, constituting a veritable psychical phenomenon.

This very morning such a phenomenon took place. I was alone in the library, as everyone had gone to church. I was sitting near the French window which opens on to the garden, and was thoroughly enjoying the beautiful spring morning. The sun was veiled with that slight mist which often gives to the English landscape a still, dreamy aspect. I picked up a Bible from a table near me, and, opening it mechanically, began to read verse after verse haphazard, from Genesis. The sound of the church bells, and the song of the birds, softened by the peculiar atmosphere, were an accompaniment to the sacred poetry. It seemed to me for a moment that the words were floating on the waves of this sweet music, and I felt as though God himself were saying to me:

"Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree," and obeying irresistibly the suggestion, I looked out at the trees, the flowers in the garden, and at the velvety grass of the lawn. This was a fresh sensation to me, and it was exquisite and only too brief. I tried to have a repetition of it in the afternoon, but did not succeed.

Another day, I had a revelation of what the Bible really is to the English. I was visiting some friends of mine in the country, and, when we were out walking, I called with my hostess at the cottage of one of her farmers who was dangerously ill. Whilst she was talking to the man's wife, I saw a girl of sixteen or seventeen years of age take a Bible from the chimney-piece. She held it for a moment with her two thumbs pressed on to the edges. She then opened the book slowly and her face at once beamed with joy and hope.

"Father," she said, approaching the sick man, "you are going to get well. I have read it in the Book, here, under my left thumb." She opened the Testament wide and read: "A bruised reed shall he not break and smoking flax shall he not quench."

"That is quite plain," she added, in a tone of conviction.

"May be, may be," murmured the poor man.

He did recover, and I was glad to hear it, for I do not like people to have their faith shaken. I am told that country girls still consult the Bible about their future. They close the door of their room, tie the key between the pages of Solomon's great love-song. They then put their finger through the ring and ask the question: "Shall I be married?" If the book, which is hanging from the string, turns round, the answer is supposed to be in the affirmative. I am convinced that many other English people, especially those who risk great chances in life, question the Bible secretly, for there is in the Anglo-Saxon soul an innate and absolute faith in the Hereafter. According to the mentality of the person, the Bible is a living or dead letter. It is the same with it as with those crystals which are being studied now in relation to psychical science. Although they do their utmost, some people can see nothing in them but their own nose, whilst others see pictures, human figures, or scenes taking place in the distance. Instantaneous conversions due to the reading of the Sacred Book can, I now feel sure, take place.

As regards the Bible, it is the Old Testament, more particularly, that works on the soul of our neighbours, the English.

Their language brings out the beauty of its rough, violent poetry, whilst our language weakens it and makes it almost ridiculous. On the other hand, ours translates the Gospel exquisitely. Last summer I was fortunate enough to have an opportunity of studying the contrasts between the Anglo-Saxon and the Latin religious mentality. It was at Schinznach in Switzerland. In a corner of the park, a little Catholic chapel has been built. To my surprise, I discovered that hospitality was given there to the Anglican Church, also. It is true that at watering-places the unexpected often happens. One Sunday morning I went in to Mass. There were a certain number of the French visitors, five or six countrywomen of the neighbourhood, and a few servants. The little chapel looked charming with its altar decorated with flowers and the symbolical light from the wax tapers. There were two little statues of the Virgin and St. Joseph, horribly painted, it is true, but with a kindly smile on their lips. The priest gave us a discourse on the words: "Suffer little children to come unto me," and from the whole of the little service emanated a warmth of soul and something affectionate which made a bond of union between us, and left me with a very agreeable impression. After this, I went for a long walk, and, on my return, attracted by the sound of the harmonium in the little chapel, I went in and found myself in the midst of the Anglican service. What a change of atmosphere! The choir screen was closed, and to the right, separated by a sort of curtain from the Catholic Holy of Holies, was a table on which was a cup, covered with a kind of paten, and the prayer-book open for the Communion Service. The assembly was composed of about twenty persons dressed up in their Sunday clothes in the approved way. After singing a psalm, a lesson was read and soon after the clergyman began to preach. He did not look more than twenty years old, and from his youthful face a very evangelical sermon might have been expected, touching in its faith and enthusiasm. This was not what we had, by any means. The young man was painfully nervous, and, whilst wriggling about in his pulpit, he talked to us for half an hour of the quarrels of the Idumeans

and the Sadducees. Just as though we had not enough with our own quarrels. This strife between the sects evidently interested him greatly, and his audience appeared to share the interest he felt, no doubt considering it as a kind of spiritual sport. When he had finished his account, deadly dull as any but English people would have considered it, a gentleman arrayed in the classical frock-coat stood up, opened the Bible to a chapter of the Book of Kings, I believe, and proceeded to read us a list of the presents that the Queen of Sheba presented to King Solomon. What satisfaction could that possibly have given him? I do not know at all, but certain it is that his voice was sonorous with pride as he enumerated all this wealth. From time to time he glanced at his audience, as though asking them if all this were not fine. He could not have been prouder if all these gold and silver ornaments and these heaps of precious stones had been presented to his own King, and I am not sure that in his mind there was not a sort of vague association between the greatness of Israel and the greatness of England. No one moved, and after this reading the singing of the psalms began once more. I looked round curiously. Prayer, which softens Latin faces and sometimes transfigures them so that they become beautiful, makes the Anglo-Saxon faces look colder and more severe. The way of administering Holy Communion charmed me. When the ordinary church service was over, the congregation, with the exception of those who wished to take the Sacrament, went away. I had the audacity to remain behind. Three persons then went up to the Communion Table, and, in the midst of one of those wonderful silences which sometimes take place here below, they ate the bread and drank the wine "in memory of Him."

These two religious services, at which I had been present on the same day, produced a very vivid impression in my mind, and as I went away I said to myself: "The English soul is Old Testament, and ours is New Testament."

Next to the Bible, nothing has helped me so much in penetrating the Anglo-Saxon character as the reading of those hymns which they sing, not only in the churches, but in the

public squares and at all religious assemblies. These hymns reveal a simple mind, at the same time powerful and childlike, a combative race, in love with every kind of grandeur, in whose dreams and visions there are always thrones, crowns, and high places. A warlike spirit breathes through them, they might be battle marches for the conquest of Heaven. Even faith itself is armed, and we hear the sound of trumpets and the notes of the clarion. On hearing them it is easy to understand the Salvation Army. But although these hymns contain Old Testament wine there is also a little of the Gospel honey in them. There are touching appeals, very childlike even, in all the cries of distress, and they are profoundly human. Their charm lies in that. The word home is often used in them, and there is a divine sweetness in that. When these hymns are sung out at sea on Sunday, around a reading-desk draped with the Union Jack, on which is the Bible, the soul must surely mount as high as it is possible.

The Bible, the psalms and hymns, therefore, compose the spiritual nourishment of our neighbours. Like their bodily nourishment, it is plain and strong. It gives them a severe mentality with few delicate shades—a mentality somewhat metaphysical. The spiritual nourishment of the Latins, like their bodily nourishment, is more complex, more delicate, and more savoury. Side by side with their magnificent Liturgy, they have a crowd of minor devotions, symbols, imagery, the Altar Sacrifice, and the emotions of the confessional. All that modifies their soul infinitely, makes it more ardent and more subtle, leads it on as far as possible towards the world beyond. These different foods are, no doubt, necessary to our different essences. What marvellous secrets Nature has for varying human beings and things!

St. Olaf.

The English might be characterised as the people of sad Sundays and the French as the people of joyful Sundays. The English Sunday is certainly not like any other, and it seems to me to constitute a veritable psychical phenomenon. The

mere lack of amusement could not produce that absolute boredom which every foreigner experiences and of which he carries away the impression. There is in the moral atmosphere an unusual rigidness which makes all gaiety impossible. Unconsciously, everyone speaks in a lower voice, keeps a guard on his lips, and at the same time feels an occult influence weighing heavily. Perhaps the souls of the Puritan ancestors, of the psalm-singers, are exteriorised on that day and make their hard unyieldingness felt in the ambient air. I fear it may be this, for the dead are more living than we think. We do not yet know their power and it is certainly formidable. To all this must be added the "Old Testament" religious mentality of our neighbours, of which I have spoken. It has often amused me to compare the coming out of church in France and in England. Here, as soon as the doors open, a crowd of stiff, solemn people are to be seen. They shake hands automatically, say "How do you do?" to each other, and then disperse silently. In our country the crowd of believers is always very animated. There is a kind of joy on their faces, and they exchange smiles, greetings, and news. They begin to gossip before the organ has finished, and their worldly life then flows on again. I am quite convinced that we should have gay Sundays even with the same observances as our neighbours. These observances, too, are not really as strict as we imagine them to be. It is not obligatory to attend church. Dinner is at midday instead of at night, and there is supper after the evening service. Roast beef is a very general dish. Sundays in France are associated for me with the smell of incense, and English Sundays with the odour of roast beef. In reality, the chief difference between that day and others is, that one is supposed to read serious books, to abstain from playing games, from worldly amusements, and to have nothing but sacred music. There are certain Puritans who go farther still than this, and there are families where playthings are forbidden on Sundays, where letters may not be written, and where the chief reading consists of indigestible sermons. We, too, have our devout persons, who not only fast on Fridays, according to the laws laid

down, but even refuse to put butter in their soup, or on their bread.

For a foreigner alone in London, Sunday must be deadly dull, but in the country, and with friends, it is neither long nor dreary. At St. Olaf my friends only go to church once in the day. Mudie's books are taken away and I can easily guess who puts volumes of sermons and the Bible in their place on the library table. Instead of the *Morning Post* we have the *Sunday Times*. The copious and classical dinner is usually followed by a little siesta, known as "forty winks," to which nobody owns. Rodney brings his friends in to tea and the informal supper is a change from the solemnity of the usual meals. The day generally ends with the singing of some hymns. Yesterday evening the little Sunday scene seemed very touching to me. Rodney was at the piano, playing gently with his big, strong fingers. The manly words of the English hymns seemed suitable to his decided mouth, and their simple rhythm harmonised well with his sturdy figure. Mrs. Baring, very fine in her Sunday cap and her black satin dress trimmed with old lace, blended her weak voice with the powerful, manly one of her son. Edith, standing up by her brother, with a haughty and somewhat disdainful expression on her face and her dumb lips nervously compressed, did nothing but turn the leaves for him. Her Catholic scruples prevented her, no doubt, from joining in the Protestant hymns. This silence, which separated her from her family, seemed to me very pathetic. A shadow seemed to be hanging over this pretty home scene, but it was a shadow that lent it an additional value.

There could, of course, be no bridge on Sunday at St. Olaf. Edith would have played willingly, as her new religion allows this, but she would not have liked to pain her mother nor yet scandalise the servants.

A little experience of my own had shown me how wrong it is to act otherwise. Two years previously I was visiting some very English people. One Sunday we took refuge in a summer arbour at the end of the garden to play bridge, as from time to time one has a longing for forbidden fruit. As fate would have

it, a visitor called, and the maid, on coming to announce this, caught us in the very act. She started back, pale with horror, as though she had seen a corpse, and I was so taken aback that the cards fell from my hands. I made an inward vow never to touch cards again from that day forth in England on Sundays.

This way of observing the Sabbath has always excited our humoristic vein and I think quite wrongly. In all probability Nature has willed that there should be a cessation of all work every seventh day in the great English ant-hill where the effort is so great. Nature has willed that the nerves at such a terrible strain should have some relaxation. She understands how to place interrupters wherever they are necessary, and to turn human thought into the current where it will meet with repose and fresh forces. She has turned that of our neighbours into the religious current, in order to prevent them from flinging themselves into dissipation. With their violent appetites, that would have been dangerous. Nature has done this for all the Northern races.

The strict observance of the Sabbath is good for English children, as they are taught through this to respect something and it gives a serious turn to their mind. I had a charming instance of this during one of my country visits in England. My hostess's little daughter, a child of seven years old, took me down the garden one Sunday to show me an ant-hill in which she was greatly interested and which she furnished with bread crumbs every day. It was between six and seven o'clock and the ants were no longer there.

"Oh, I had forgotten," said the child, very disappointed, "they are all at church of course."

Such an idea would never have occurred to a French child.

One Sunday afternoon this winter at Monte Carlo, I was at the billiard table trying to cannon. An English boy of twelve years of age with whom I often played happened to be there. He fetched a cue, hoping no doubt that I should invite him to join me. Just at that moment his mother came into the room and, on seeing what he was holding, she laid her hand on his shoulder and said gently:

"Remember, it is Sunday, dear."

The child blushed to the roots of his hair and without the slightest rebellion took the cue back to its place. I did not want him to think that I was breaking the commandments and so I explained to him that our religion allowed us to play after church.

"A nice religion," he said, putting his hands in his pockets in a way which with men is expressive of humour.

This respect for Sunday, thus anchored in the child's brain, stays there through many of his later adventures. England's prodigal sons, when they have broken all the other commandments, often keep this one, because it is associated with the memory of their mother and their home. And yet, in spite of all this, the English Sunday has commenced its evolution. This evolution will, no doubt, be accomplished very, very slowly, as it will be hampered by the legion of Puritans and by popular sentiment, but I fear it will be accelerated by snobbishness, by the wish to appear to be up to date. It had its origin in that nest of badness, that clan of ultra-worldlings known as "smart society." There, everyone laughs openly at the prohibitions which make the Sabbath a holy day. Gay luncheon parties are given and, behind the drawn curtains, for the curtains even there are drawn for this, exciting bridge contests take place by gas or electric light. In the evening, under the pretext of letting the servants have a quiet day, the Carlton or the Savoy is frequented for dinner. In the suburbs, in provincial towns, and in the country, Sunday is still strictly observed. At Wimbledon, though, I have heard croquet balls being knocked about and have seen tennis being played. I very thoughtlessly mentioned this one day to Mrs. Baring, and, ashamed of such transgressions, a faint colour came into her face as she gave a little resigned smile.

"I know," she said gently, "and it is a great pity."

I notice a great many signs which testify to the gradual emancipation of our neighbours. Women go to church, nowadays, in toques, or even with startling round hats. The bonnet is only worn now by the direct representatives of Old

England. The Sunday bonnet, generally light-coloured and very ugly, trimmed with flowers or feathers, has an unyielding, highly respectable look about it which always impresses me. The bonnet worn by our devout women is not any more beautiful, but it is dark, and its simplicity makes it look less aggressive. Both bonnets are typical and it is very evident that it would be no use to attempt to turn the heads of the wearers, or even to try to change their ideas.

This evolution which is felt in the moral atmosphere, has not yet caused religious ardour to wane much with our neighbours. In England, if the brain-cells of spirituality are only active once a week they certainly are wildly active then. There is preaching and prayer not only in the churches but also in the public squares. Pianos and organs are taken there and hymns are sung. Men and women of the lower classes are suddenly moved to talk about God, to denounce evil, and to exhort to good actions, and they do this in the most extraordinary words, their faces transfigured, as though the sacred fire had touched their lips. This phenomenon always interests me. It seems to me enough to prove invisible suggestion.

Last Sunday, towards two o'clock, I suddenly heard the voice of a preacher out of doors. In spite of my friend, who, out of patriotic pride, does not like me to witness ridiculous scenes, I put on my hat and went to this out-door service. In the middle of the road, with about twenty people round him, was a young, well-dressed man, a gentleman to all appearance. He had a refined face and those blue eyes peculiar to idealists and criminals. He was pacing up and down within a radius of a few yards, his left hand behind his back and his hat and stick in his right hand. He was speaking of Christ's goodness and of our redemption. "The blood of Jesus—the blood of Jesus" came like a refrain, punctuating in a curious way his sentences. He was listened to without the faintest smile, everyone's gaze riveted on his lips. When the discourse was over the crowd quietly dispersed and the men moved off, with their hands in their pockets and their heads slightly lowered, as though their brains had a few extra thoughts to carry

away. Mrs. Baring told me that this young man was the son of the owner of one of the finest houses in Wimbledon, that both father and son were extremely religious and charitable, and that all through the summer they gave garden parties to the poor.

A sermon preached out in the street by a gentleman and listened to respectfully, forty-five minutes away from London, was something to astonish a Frenchwoman! What a difference that shows between the English disposition and ours, and what liberty it proves!

Liberty! The word is not written up anywhere here, as in France, on the public buildings, but the sensation of liberty is felt everywhere and it seems to increase the open space before one. It makes the Unknown Isle, which is really very small, seem immense.

After all, the English Sunday, which has been so greatly ridiculed, has a certain charm about it. The cessation of material activity brings about peace and silence. In the midst of this silence one hears the harmonies of Nature better, one understands oneself better. The musical peal of church bells, silent during the week, sends notes of religious cheerfulness through the air. The wheels of prayer, which turn on this day, produce beneficial, soothing waves, which must diminish selfishness, soften instincts, and elevate the soul. We do not perhaps know all that we owe to the English Sunday.

St. Olaf.

At St. Olaf there are six persons worshipping the same God and with four different forms of worship.

Edith and the cook are Roman Catholics, Mrs. Baring and her son belong to the Anglican Church, one of the maids is a Wesleyan, and the other a Baptist. The English Church, that is, the established one, has not been able to preserve its unity. The dissenters from this church are styled Nonconformists. It is also divided in itself into the High Church and the Low Church party. In the former there are numerous services, much bowing and kneeling, priests with elegant surplices and

rich stoles, the altar, candles, incense, flowers, and some of the pomp of Catholicism. In some churches there is even the confessional, I am told. The Low Church has fewer symbols, a simpler service, and all that might distract the attention or move the senses is rigidly excluded. These two forms of worship, which correspond to two distinct temperaments, have also different degrees. In the Unknown Isle it seems to me as though the flock leads its shepherd. The congregation may be more or less High Church and the clergyman must fall in with this and lead his flock skilfully, or he may find himself deserted by it. Generally speaking, the upper classes belong to the Church and the lower middle class and the people are Nonconformists. The religious sect and the chapel serve as the club of poor people, for the need of belonging to a sect or to a club is innate with English people.

The Catholic movement is making great progress in England. About ten years ago, for instance, the Jesuits came to Wimbledon as missionaries and they now have a cathedral and a large college there. Numbers of monks and nuns, whose monasteries and convents have been closed in France, have met with generous and liberal hospitality, on this side of the Channel. The Government knows its own strength too well to be tyrannical or arbitrary. The Catholicism that was driven into the catacombs in the sixteenth century is coming gradually to the surface again and spreading rapidly. Without knowing it the High Church party has been preparing the way for it. It satisfies those who feel the need of religion more thoroughly. The fact that it goes back to St. Peter without a break in its continuity and the logical and deductive sequence in its dogmas, effect the majority of the conversions. It is not very probable that it will ever get back its preponderance in this country, where the mentality is essentially masculine, Puritan, and Protestant. An Englishman following a procession, or an Englishman kneeling at the altar of the Virgin Mary or of a Saint, always amazes me. He looks as awkward and uncomfortable as though he were wearing woman's clothes. The Latin and the Slav are more flexible in their strength. They

bend the knee, bow at benediction, and kiss relics or images with a chivalrous devotion which is innate. Catholicism, too, seems to become more virile and colder in passing through the Saxon mind. It becomes more sincere, less sensuous, and less mystical. Confession, for instance, has more dignity. The English priest does not encourage those confidences in which French women penitents delight and which are disloyal to the husband. In the confessional, the Englishman remains a gentleman. The confessionals in the Wimbledon cathedral very much surprised me. They are composed of two large light cells, separated by a partition with the canonical confessional box. In the priest's cell, I saw a writing table covered with papers. A cassock and surplice were hanging on a nail. In the penitent's cell, there were only the crucifix, a shelf, and a hassock in front of the grating. The commonplace, prosaic surroundings and the crude light from the window must act like a cold shower-bath on the devout women who are nervous, or in love. I could not help thinking of the little shut-up recess in the chapel of the Jesuit Fathers of the Rue de Sèvres, Paris, with the dim mysterious light and the black serge curtains that the women draw aside with a trembling hand. Behind those curtains, they can open their very soul and they come out again pale and shivering after a special kind of emotion. The English arrangement of doing away with the darkness and mystery brings the penitential court back to its true and simple function. Another thing that made an agreeable impression on me here was the fact that the candles on the altar are of pure wax and are never made up with zinc, as in Latin countries. Last Sunday, at High Mass, I could scarcely believe that I was at a Catholic service. The liturgy and the rites were of course the same, but they were conducted in another way; that is, with a thoroughly Saxon correctness. Priests, worshippers, the beadle and the choristers, all seemed to be penetrated with the duty they were accomplishing, but there was not a single fervent beam on their faces. The psychical atmosphere was certainly several degrees lower than it would have been in a French church. The religious temperament was absolutely different.

I mentioned this to Edith, but she did not understand, as she finds the service as it is too emotional.

"It requires several generations to make a Catholic," I said to her. "Converted people can never quite understand that."

"Do you think that?" she asked and then, with a mocking smile, she added:

"I am a thousand times more Catholic than you are."

"That you might easily be," I replied, frankly. "You are more Catholic, certainly, but you are not as Catholic perhaps."

This it seems to me might apply to the whole English Church.

St. Olaf.

Mr. Baring and I are now friends. I call him Rodney and, at times even, I find myself saying "my dear boy" to him. In spite of his twenty-seven years, he looks very young. He considers me a good chum and I appreciate the compliment, for at my age one usually gets too much respect. He brings me the *Figaro* every evening and I have free access to his "den." I have not banished his lady-love though, a certain beloved pipe which is very dear to his heart. He gives me the best armchair and always asks me with great solicitude whether I am quite comfortable. That, too, is very characteristic. To look after your comfort is always an Englishman's first care, entertainment comes afterwards. A Frenchman will always think of entertaining you first.

The very day after my arrival, I endeavoured to get into conversation with my host. This was not easy, as his shyness and an instinctive distrust had first to be conquered. I succeeded, however, to our satisfaction.

Our language is more familiar to him than I should have imagined. He first ventured on a few French phrases, but not without a great effort. When he saw that I did not laugh, he continued and now he swims along courageously among our verbs and grammatical difficulties. I surprised him reading one of Balzac's novels and this gave me the same pleasure as a national victory.

Rodney interests me, as he is a pure specimen of an Anglo-Saxon. Besides this, he gives me an agreeable impression of straightforwardness, of physical and moral cleanliness. His mind is what is known in England as "a legal mind." He always sees at once the weak point of an argument, throws in the wedge of his logic or humour, and overturns it with the fewest possible words. Unless I am very much mistaken, there is the making of a politician and a statesman in him. Like most of his fellow-countrymen he sees only the main lines of things and he disdains the side issues. History interests him more than anything else. He knows ours very well and particularly the Napoleonic epopee. The English have always envied us that, and Napoleon still has enormous prestige with them.

Rodney has, of course, an entirely wrong conception of us and of our character. I am trying to put that right—and his face expresses the most candid astonishment sometimes, at my explanations. He had never certainly talked about so many different subjects before. He is becoming acquainted with what we call general ideas, and all this is a revelation to him. I see too that it is an ever-increasing pleasure. Whenever I meet with a young man of a certain intelligence, I always try to make him see life as it is. Every time I get Rodney to consider it from the point where it seems to me so marvellous, his surprise and the awakening of his interest cause me infinite delight.

The other evening, Edith's head ached, so that she retired after our game at bridge, and Rodney took me into the library for a "good battle" as he said laughingly. In spite of his warlike inclinations, our conversation was most pacific.

We merely discussed and compared characteristics and habits and customs.

"It seems to me," I said, "that England is the ant-hill and France the bee-hive."

"Oh indeed!" remarked Rodney.

"Yes, you see with the ants, there is grain for food, strength admirably canalized, stern, gigantic work, the aim and object

of which is extension and wealth. Theirs is masculine triumph. With the bees there is the hive which kills kings and queens, then wings, light, blue sky, flowers, honey, varied and fitful work, an overheated atmosphere. Theirs is feminine triumph."

Rodney stopped smoking and looked at me, quite bewildered.

"What a comparison!" he exclaimed.

"And there must be ants and there must be bees. There must be an England and there must be a France. Both countries fancy they are working for themselves and they are working for Life."

"It seems to me that such an arrangement does not leave them much freedom."

"It leaves them none."

"Good Heavens! Well, all I can say is, even if liberty of action is merely an illusion, you may be sure that mankind will cling to it for a long time."

"Yes, until the day when mankind can do without it. When a belief has become of no further use to humanity, it is dropped, just in the same way as the tails of tadpoles disappear without their being aware of it."

"Ah, you think they are not aware of it?" said Rodney with comic seriousness.

"They do not appear to be, anyhow; humanity, though, changes its skin in the same way as the serpents do. Every one of these changes makes one of the great stages in life. The pagan religion, for instance, became mythology. Christianity, in its turn, will become a mythology when a more elevated religion has taken its place. It will probably be like this on our earth until the end of time."

"Ah, it is very evident that you have frequented Darwin."

"I have neither read nor studied him. I cannot tell how his theories have come to me. I perhaps owe to them the idea I have of moral evolution. Can we ever tell how many of other people's thoughts enter into our own thought?"

"All the same," remarked Rodney, with a gleam of mockery in his eyes, "England an ant-hill and France a bee-hive—and

both of them working for Life—your idea is a little difficult to digest, you know."

"Not for a mind of the twentieth century," I answered, smiling.

It is a very rare thing for the conversation between Rodney and me not to turn on Paris and, as usual, we spoke of it on this occasion.

"Paris always attracts me," my host confessed, "and then at the end of two days it makes me discontented and exasperated and I cannot tell why. I even want to quarrel with the very people in the street. Is not that strange?"

"No, your irritation is caused by your absolute incapacity to understand people and things there, and that sensation is intolerable to every Britisher."

"Are we such vain animals?" asked Rodney good-humouredly.

"The hostility of most of your fellow-countrymen has no other reason. Many a time I have heard them call French 'an idiotic language,' simply because they could not understand it."

"You are perhaps right," said the young man, colouring slightly. "Then, too, there is the difference of education. The familiarity of the waiters in the restaurants and the mocking look of the cabbies irritate me beyond measure. I always feel like a man who is being pushed about and yet dare not show his anger. Do you understand?"

"Quite. You think the lines of demarcation are not clearly defined with us. Is that it?"

"Yes, a man does not know where he is. Then, too, when I am in Paris, I realise how limited my knowledge of French is. I do not go so far as to call it 'an idiotic language,' but I always come out of the theatre rather irritated. I am furious at not being able to appreciate the savour of the piece I have just heard."

"Well, your late King never felt discontented after the Vaudeville or the Palais Royal, I can assure you. He enjoyed himself there like a veritable Parisian. From the expression of his face,

one could see that the elevated ideas, the droll allusions, and the refined vulgarity which is a French speciality, were appreciated by him. One evening, when I saw him shaking with laughter, I said to myself, 'He understands us and some day he will prove it to us.' Who knows how great a part the remembrance of those hours spent with us played in the *Entente Cordiale*. I fancy he felt grateful for the gaiety."

"I daresay that is so."

"You see it is not enough to study the language of your neighbours. You must take the trouble to study them themselves. I tell all Englishmen that in Latin countries they must remember that the essence is feminine. That explains our politics, our history, and our very soul."

Rodney laughed at this.

"I should like to see the face of one of your fellow-countrymen if I told him that France was feminine. He would probably call me out."

"If you said that France was effeminate, yes, but to be feminine is quite another thing. Every thoughtful man knows the worth of the feminine essence. We owe our intuitions to that, our most precious gifts, our ascensional force. With us, too, the Celtic and Frank element is mingled with it and it does not weaken our character. On the contrary it strengthens it. In the provinces and among the middle classes in Paris you would get a true idea of all this. You would be astonished at the strength, correctness, and Puritanism there."

"Really," said my host, with a mocking smile.

"If France produces champagne, she also produces Burgundy, which is a strong wine, remember. In the Seine Department, we may be like champagne, but in eighty-five other departments of France we are like our Burgundy. Foreigners have an absolutely erroneous idea of us and of our habits and customs."

"Whose fault is that?" asked Rodney. "Your evil reputation is due to your own novels, and to certain of your illustrated papers."

"Continue," I said, "I quite expected this. I have never yet met an Englishman who has spared me that reproach."

"I have never yet been able to understand how it comes about that a nation of idealists, such as you are, should delight in talking of the ugly things of Nature. We try to hide them, from a mere instinct of dignity and cleanliness. One of my friends who has been two years in South Africa, tells me that such things form the sole subject of conversation and of jokes among all the savage tribes. Why should this taste be found among the most refined and civilised of nations? Can you explain that?"

"At the top and bottom of the ladder," . . . I remarked, rather struck by this reflection. "Is it not a play of Nature? She has perhaps wanted this vein to be preserved. Certain minds have retained it through atavism. A talented author, who writes very brilliant but ugly books, replied, when I was reproaching him for this, that he was absolutely incapable of writing on other themes. 'I cannot help it,' he said, shrugging his shoulders; 'nothing but these frolicsome ideas come to me.' For my own part, I consider it a profanation to use our elegant, refined language for the writing of ignoble and dirty things. I can assure you, too, that our good books bring in more than our bad ones. Pornographic writers must work hard to be able to earn a little money. And then, too even in these low books, there is an artistic side with us, extreme refinement and a depth unknown to the savage, I can assure you," I said, smiling. "The question is what is the use of such books, and only a naturalist could answer that. Manure is necessary for making certain flowers bloom and we can only pity those whose task it is to spread the manure. Grasse, for instance, so celebrated for its scents, is anything but pleasant during the months of October and November, but three months later the whole place is very sweet with perfume. That is how Nature works."

Rodney looked at me in amazement.

"Well, well," he said slowly, "you would find a way to justify even Satan."

"I try to explain things. This spring, a novel was published which you would have called ignoble, and yet I should like to put it into the hands of all intelligent mothers. It was the study of

a case of cerebral perversity which they might meet with in their daughters. This study, published as a natural history pamphlet, would have been absolutely moral; as a novel it is immoral. We are too bold in our conceptions and you English are not bold enough. This keeps you in a regrettable state of inferiority."

"We own that," observed Rodney.

"People read more in England than in France," I continued.

"Really?"

"Yes, that is a fact. With us, in plenty of houses there is not even a bookshelf. Wherever you English are in the habit of staying, there are libraries. Paris has not one circulating library like yours, or like the Vieusseux library of Florence. Every day at Wimbledon, I see Mudie's delivery cart bringing and taking away quantities of books. You would never find anything like that in our suburbs. Yes, you certainly read more, but your literary food is pitifully poor. Your novels, for instance, are nothing yet but patent foods for children."

Rodney laughed out at this, but with perfect good humour. "Patent foods for children," he repeated, "Yes that is true, but clean and wholesome at any rate, and men who are tired and blasé are glad to come back to them."

"That is, perhaps, what explains the taste for novels which I have noticed in most Englishmen. On the boat and in the railway train, I have often smiled on seeing great fellows of six feet, who were probably in the very thick of the battle of life, plunged in a volume of Tauchnitz, their thumbs held tightly in their clenched hands, after the manner of happy children, and a peculiar gentleness on their face as they read."

"You see there is some good in our patent food."

"Yes, and I often need it myself. I go and fetch such books from Galignani's and your simple love-stories are a rest to me after philosophical and psychological novels. They sometimes move me to tears and make me feel young again."

"We are not quite without great novelists," remarked Rodney, shaking the ash from his cigar with his little finger.

"No, certainly not, and you have some very strong ones. I

am always on the look out for another Dickens, though. Pickwick and Don Quixote are the two books that I have read and read over again the most."

"Among our contemporaries which authors do you prefer?"

"Meredith, Merriman, Stevenson, Jerome, and Conan Doyle."

"Good," exclaimed my host, "our tastes are alike there!"

"Among your women writers, I like Mrs. Humphry Ward. There is something maternal in her books. She always has an idea on her canvas, a broad, generous idea around which she works; and one feels that all her efforts are used for producing what is good. I like Marie Corelli and Ouida for their audacity and femininity. But you will never be really great except in poetry," I added. "You lighted your torch at pagan and sacred poetry and that is why you get so high a flame."

"I am glad to hear you say that," put in Rodney.

"In England, in France and everywhere else, there is a lack of great writers, of great artists. The gods are guiding our efforts most visibly in the direction of science. They want to enable us to acquire fresh elements, a deeper insight. The ideal faculties are at rest just now with the Terrestrians. They will come into activity again later on and they will then have acquired breadth. Nature requires a long time for producing a Shakespeare."

Rodney gazed at me in astonishment and then smiled. "Your way of looking at the things of this world is a trifle disconcerting. In order to keep up with you, one has to change shoulders for one's gun."

"Change shoulders, by all means; if that will rest you. In your modern literature a formidable movement towards emancipation is to be felt. If it should increase, it will be dangerous for your girls."

My host looked pleased.

"Ah, you understand then one of the causes for that reserve which your compatriots call hypocrisy. We are obliged to have a certain restraint for the sake of the girls. We give up our liberty, so that they may have more. They must be able to go to our theatres, libraries, everywhere in fact without danger,

just as they must be able to travel alone throughout our country. In your country, you keep them out of sight. In Paris, I never meet any girls and you have no idea how one misses them."

"They are certainly not to be met at the places you frequent, at the races, the Folies-Bergères, or the Olympia," I said, smiling.

"I have also been to the Concours Hippique and to the Opéra-Comique," he persisted.

"And were there not any there?"

"No, or perhaps I was not able to distinguish them from the married women. After I have been some time on the Continent, the sight of our English girls out of doors, dressed simply and totally unfettered, gives me real pleasure. I pity Frenchmen who can only mix with society women or with *demi-mondaines*, with women who belong to other men I mean. They know nothing of feminine comradeship, one of the most wholesome and pleasant things there is."

"Certainly, and I have regretted that many a time for them. Girls would purify our life, and I long for the moment when they will make their appearance. The evolution of manners and customs is such a big, slow affair. Tell me what you think though of our Parisian women?" I asked curiously.

"They are very gracious, very agreeable to look at, but—they are not—young enough. . . . Oh! I do not mean that they are faded or wrinkled," he hastened to add, "they see to that, but they know too much, they are too artificial, and that makes them terribly uncomfortable."

"Uncomfortable!" I repeated, amused at this epithet applied to persons.

"Yes, how can a poor Britisher guess what is behind their pretty looks and manners?"

"It is just that something unknown which makes them interesting," I said.

"For Frenchmen perhaps, but we are much too simple minded. We like to find in woman a loving and restful creature, and not a living riddle to puzzle out. When we want amusement, we

prefer sports of some kind—they are more wholesome and fortifying."

"Oh, John Bull, John Bull," I exclaimed laughing.

"Now the Parisian women I admire," continued Rodney, "and who always interest me, are your little work-girls. I have often seen them leaving their work-rooms in the Rue de la Paix. Their bright faces and gay looks have given me a better idea than anything else of your extreme vitality. What a difference between them and the poor, gloomy, silent girls who emerge from the London basements."

"The beehive," I said; "our work-girls are the bees. In spite of their dusty, crumpled wings they fly about under the blue sky. Your girls are the ants."

"Oh well, as you want it to be like that, I am quite willing," observed Rodney with mocking condescension.

Edith is privately delighted when she sees me putting her brother right about his judgment of things and people in France. I feel that he is less prejudiced already. An Englishman is not generally obstinate. He does not absolutely refuse to see a thing as a Frenchman does. I am firmly convinced that our conversations are not in vain. In vain, ah, no; when once our words are uttered, are not the ideas, necessary for our respective work, registered by the receiver that we have behind our foreheads? Some of those ideas stay there buried for a long time, perhaps, others are developed and transformed into action, thus producing certain wished-for effects. If Rodney Baring should become a leader, and he is quite capable, those ideas might have a salutary influence on his policy. Something very good may be the outcome of my visit to St. Olaf. I sincerely hope so.

St. Olaf.

In England, one has the sensation of number all the time. This sensation, which finally becomes oppressive, is caused by the rows of houses on every side, stretching out as far as the eye can see, and it is also caused by the sight of the multitude of children. Oh those children, they literally swarm! They seem to come out from underground and they give the Unknown Isle

the appearance of a veritable nursery. It is evidently numerical superiority that Nature wished to establish on this side the Channel, and it is my opinion that the character, manners, and customs and policy of our neighbours are partly the result of number, and partly the result of their quality of islanders. It is because of their number that their special type of dwelling, the house, has been created and it is on account of their number that their early education aims above all at disciplining the individual. The institution of that special department for the bringing up of the little ones, the nursery, seems to have no other end in view.

The children's nest is composed of one or more rooms. Some of the nests are luxuriously simple with bathroom and everything that can conduce to health and cleanliness. Others are very modest and even very poorly fitted up, but there is always a visible effort to procure as much light, air, and water as possible, and to let the children receive pleasant impressions, by means of pictures, books, and flowers. The English child is the one that is most truthful. The nurse has an instinctive respect for the scions of another class who are confided to her care. With a power of suggestion that I have often admired, she inculcates into their minds respect for one's promises, and above all a horror of untruth. She may be hard, sour-tempered, and even make them suffer, but she will never tarnish their pure minds by coarse words, and, with an intuition that is surprising, she will bring them up in a way suitable to their social position. Twenty times a day you may hear her saying to a nobleman's child: "A gentleman does not behave like that!" It is curious and touching to hear a mere daughter of the people working, in this way, to form the character of the great. Her very mission refines her personally, and the economy of Nature is thus satisfied.

In England, children used to be brought up in a Spartan-like way. Their nurseries were cold-looking and bare, their food of primitive simplicity and very little varied. Obedience was obtained from them by threats of everlasting punishment. Nowadays, the prettiest pictures are put before their eyes,

and the brightest and most cheerful colours. They are told of Heaven and of rewards, their guardian angel has taken the place of Satan, and soars above all cradles. This evolution is very remarkable and characteristic of our epoch.

In the very nursery, children are taught to respect the liberty of others, hierarchy, and the lines of demarcation drawn for the general order of society. They learn their place and they keep to it. They never think of invading the territory of their parents and they consider it a favour to be allowed there at certain hours. On the other hand, they feel quite at home in their own nest. They invite you there and entertain you very prettily. They live their own life there, and not that of grown-up people. The life in which there are only playthings, animals, flowers, stories, and songs is kept exquisitely pure. Nursery days mark a distinct epoch in the life of every Britisher, and very often the thoughts of the statesman and of the business man return to those days as to something refreshing.

In England, where, as I have already said, there is a love of the human race, the little ones hold an important rank. People are passionately interested in them and legions of women are working for their amusement, or for their instruction. There is a brilliant literature, a whole crowd of illustrated magazines specially for them. *Punch*, the celebrated satirist, is particularly fond of them. Edith Baring wrote the children's column in one of their papers for a whole year, signing as Aunt Cecilia. The number of letters she received from her little readers compelled her to give up her task, as she could not devote so much time to it. She has kept many of these letters and I was deeply moved on reading them. The dear children confided their real or imaginary sorrows to her. A little girl wrote about her favourite doll and asked advice about bringing it up. Another one unburdened her little heart about the grief that the death of her dog had caused her, and as I read I realised all the effort that these first letters represented. I pictured to myself the joy the child had felt on putting the stamp on to the envelope, that stamp bought, perhaps, with the penny that might have been spent in sweets. Then there was the waiting for the reply,

the watching for the postman, and finally the pride on seeing its own name written on the outside of the letter. What a multitude of fresh impressions all that must have produced! What a leap forwards! That correspondence certainly revealed a need of confiding in someone and the mother did not suffice, but at the same time it showed the liberty given to the child, a liberty which would help in the development of initiative and of individuality.

Yesterday, on arriving at the Common with Edith, I was struck with the number of white spots dotted about everywhere. The white spots were the children with their nurses.

"People must be rich at Wimbledon," I observed, "for the luxury of white clothes costs money."

"Not so much as in France," replied Edith. "And then, too, the English mother has very plain skirts herself and toilettes such as you have seen, toilettes that make you laugh, but she would not economise on her children's washing, and she can generally show you a cheerful nursery and fine specimens of children. I will take you to see one of my friends, the daughter of my former painting master, an artist of some talent, but who died quite poor. She married a young man who is not wealthy. They have about three hundred and fifty pounds a year and she has two children, a maid-of-all-work, and a nurse. Poor Lily has some difficulty in making ends meet, but she has a charming nursery nevertheless. Her house will interest you, too; it is one of the oldest in Wimbledon."

We turned to the left and very soon came to a low-built cottage with a small garden standing a little back from the road. A cyclist, with her racket and shoes fastened on to her machine, came towards us at a rapid rate.

"Here is Lily," said Miss Baring.

"What luck not to have missed you!" called out the cyclist, descending from her machine.

Edith at once introduced her French friend and Mrs. Arnold shook hands cordially. The weather was warm and fine, so that tea was served in the garden. I looked round at the quaint garden which gave me the impression of quite another epoch.

The one-storied house, with its back wing, formed a straight angle; its attic roof, irregular and sinking in, in certain places, its small windows, and old ivy dated it back two hundred years, whilst the climbers and the roses which covered part of the façade gave it a modern look. The garden had not been spoiled by the pruning shears of a professional gardener, and simple, bright-coloured flowers were growing *pêle mêle*. There were some old shrubs and two venerable apple-trees. The lawn, with its grass of a week's growth, was starred with happy little daisies, that appeared to be on good terms with each other. In this setting our hostess, with her short dress, her cambric blouse and sailor hat, looked a living anachronism.

"You ought to wear a Puritan bonnet here," I said in fun.

She got up, ran into the house, and soon returned with a sun bonnet on her head. I clapped my hands, and she said gaily:

"My sun bonnet. You see, I had the same idea."

With her beautiful fair hair, her laughing eyes, her refined face, and pink and white complexion, she was delightfully English.

Edith asked her to show me the house.

"The queer house?" she said.

"Yes, and the nursery and children."

"All my treasures?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Well come then," she said, leading the way with her sun-bonnet still on her head.

"We have not aimed at any particular style," she explained to me, "we have only endeavoured to have it clean and cheerful."

Nothing could be more curious than this eighteenth-century middle-class house. The rooms were low and irregular, the staircase very narrow, and with stairs to mount and then descend, tall mantelpieces with well-preserved mouldings, and old-fashioned grates. The downstairs rooms had wainscotings and beams and were a trifle gloomy and austere-looking, but the upstairs floor had been entirely repainted white. With its light-coloured wood furniture and its yellowish-green cretonne, of that æsthetic shade that our neighbours affect,

with its small windows, its dressing-tables covered with muslin and finished with ribbon bows, it was very gay-looking. There were a few good pictures, a quantity of books, a piano and flowers to ennoble the simple dwelling. The arrangement of everything revealed an artistic vein strongly tinged with originality.

"The purification room!" said Mrs. Arnold. "You see I do not spare you anything," as she opened the bathroom door. We then went up five or six stairs and entered another room.

"The nursery," she announced, "an ex-attic."

Ah, what a pretty living picture that nursery was! A large room, longer than it was wide, looking out on to the garden. The air, the light, and the beautiful rays of the setting sun came in through the five little windows festooned with green leaves. At the end were two small beds behind Chinese screens. The fresh atmosphere was delightful. Near one of the windows were two little children in white frocks with pink sashes. They were dazzlingly clean, with curly hair, and were eating hot bread and milk before going to bed. The nurse was also dressed in white. Shouts and gestures of delight greeted our entrance. Mrs. Arnold apologised for interrupting the meal. She stroked the children's hair and showed us with delight the firm chubby arms. The nurse's bedroom door was open and I glanced inside. It was perfectly clean and ornamented with photographs and flowers.

"This is all I can give these little mites," said Mrs. Arnold gaily.

"It is a great deal," I answered, turning round to look again at this admirably well-arranged human nest, beautified and poetised by the mother.

"I should so much like to see a French nursery," she said, "I am sure it would be very elegant." Edith smiled mischievously and I felt the colour coming into my cheeks.

"A French nursery!" I repeated, "alas, we have not any."

"No nurseries! How can you bring up your children then?"

"We bring them up badly, that is all. Oh, there is a great deal we could learn from you."

"We ought to form a society then for mutual instruction, for you could give us some lessons which would be very useful," said Mrs. Arnold, not wishing to be outdone in humility.

Alas, it is only too true that we bring our children up badly. If the English owe the qualities which are their force to their early education, we owe the faults which are our weakness to ours. We have a hive, but no place for our young. Bees have a special compartment for the larva and nympha and we have none for our children. How is it that we have not? Ah, the reason simply is that we love our children, but we do not love children. The proof of this is that we have as few as possible and we do not yet know how to keep those we have alive. If the rearing of colts in our studs were as badly understood, we should only breed horses that were doomed to be beaten in all competitions. Our interests are watched over there, and we have better inspirations.

For the early education of our sons and daughters, that education of the body and of the dawning mind, on which their health and often their happiness and their future depend, we engage, as wet nurses, uncultivated peasant women, who have only hitherto brought up calves and pigs and very often have done that very badly. The children of these women have to grow up as best they can without their mothers. On thinking all this over, it seems to me so absurd that I can scarcely believe it to be true. We insist on these peasant women being clean, certainly, we provide them with linen, with well-cut dresses, with very fine cloaks and with ribbon ruches as wide as possible to wear on their heads, as all that is supposed to do credit to the house, but who troubles about the rest? And yet we know at present what the rest means! Formerly, in spite of all the anatomical illustrations, the brain was a somewhat abstract thing to us. Science has now taught us to realise that it is a receptive apparatus, as well as one that transmits, and that it is of the most astounding sensibility. We cannot ignore the fact that the coarse pictures and the wrong ideas which are in the nurse's mind will pass into the mind of the nursling, will be imprinted on the virgin cells of its brain, and will leave their indestructible

germs there. Besides this, these peasant women have no refinement, no notion of decency and of physical cleanliness. They know nothing of the most elementary laws of health, of the value of time or even of any kind of discipline. They cannot even respect childhood. In the Champs Elysées, in the Tuileries Gardens, and everywhere else, they give objectionable exhibitions of themselves and of the children in their care, to the amazement and horror of foreigners.

These rustic educators rock their children to sleep with more or less vulgar songs peculiar to their native village. Those who have lived some time in Paris add the répertoires of café concert refrains, such as *Ma gigolette* and *Viens poupoule*, etc. I remember hearing one of these nurses getting a little girl to sleep with the following rhyme:

Nounou câline
Ta taille fine
Entrerait dans le ceinturon
Du sergent Paturon!

and also with this:

Pour vingt-cinq francs cinquante,
Pour vingt-cinq francs,
On a un pardessus
Avec du poil dessus.

The wet nurses are succeeded by other nurses who are no more refined. Both are incapable of instilling into the children the principles and habits which will help to make gentlemen and ladies of them, later on. They do not know how to eat properly, how to handle their knives and forks, and the children's meal with them is a sickening sight. This is how it comes about that we see men in high social positions betray a lack of education at table that places them at once in a lower rank of society. A man who eats like a peasant may be superior to another who eats like a civilised being, but he will never be the equal of the latter. The difference in early education separates individuals more than the difference in culture.

Then, too, our wet nurses and the others are generally rustic creatures with a coarse way of expressing themselves. When

they are angry, they are given to using ugly words, which by their very energy sink all the more deeply into the child's brain and stay there. Later on, they will be used on the slightest provocation. We hear them in the family, on all fields of work, in political discussions, and even in the house. Those coarse expressions of the wet nurse shock us terribly in the mouths of certain men.

The wet nurse, we may rest assured, has done her part all unconsciously in the work of low literature and disgusting illustrations which certain papers give us. We may thank our nurses, with their primitive language and their unsterilised minds for that vein of coarseness in us which amazes foreigners. We meet with it sometimes in our upper classes, even in some of our very great ladies, and in all those who have not sufficient innate refinement to kill it.

One year, during the Carnival, five students were to be seen, our future deputies, doctors, or perhaps magistrates, walking along the Boulevards. Each one was carrying a huge letter, and these letters spelt a disgusting word, such as boys delight in writing on walls. I could not then understand the attraction of the word for them, but it was probably a reminiscence of their wet nurses. Forain, our noted satirist, might have qualified the incident as one of their "pleasant recollections." Manure is considered necessary for valuable plants. We have certainly had plenty of this and rather too much remains with us. The human nest ought to be full of light and sunshine, or at any rate of exquisite cleanliness. The children's room in France is generally the least comfortable one in the house, it is often somewhat neglected, badly ventilated, and always commonplace. The little garments are spread out on the nurse's bed, the toilet utensils are very prominent, and playthings, which are more or less poisonous, lie about everywhere. Certain details betray the lack of refinement of the person who is bringing up the child and also the scant importance which the mother attaches to the setting in which her children's little lives are to blossom out. You will find neither engravings, portraits, nor flowers, nothing to bring pretty thoughts to their little minds,

nothing to leave a pleasant memory with them and to make them feel at home in their room. On the contrary, they are allowed to roam about the house at will. They invade every room and make themselves nuisances. The kitchen, with its stove and bright saucepans and a person always there who manufactures and gives them good things to eat, will attract them irresistibly. They will finally prefer the society of the domestics to any other. They constantly overhear conversations not meant for them. Strange words fall on their ears which confuse their little brain. They try to find out the meaning of such words, and their little faces take a strained expression with the effort. There is no more attempt made to form their character than their manners. They are not taught to obey any rule, and they do not even know whom they are expected to obey. They are not taught to have any respect for authority. The training of the will-power, which gives us such control over ourselves and over others, is completely neglected. This capricious sort of education results in a lack of method and correct behaviour. It ruins weak natures and only the strong natures manage to react. This leads, perhaps, to a sort of moral selection.

The majority of mothers, certainly, endeavour to make up themselves for the incapacity of their nurses. They are present at the dressing and undressing of their babies, they pay attention to the food, and they try to put into practice their own scant knowledge of infantile hygiene. An unacknowledged struggle goes on between them and the nurses, between routine and progress, and it is not progress which wins the day. The child is given over to inexperienced or ignorant hands. He is fettered pitilessly, dressed up in clothes which are too heavy for him, which impede his movements and prevent the development of his muscles. He neither gets enough air, light, nor water. There is, perhaps, no country where the human plant is tended with so little science and intelligence. The Parisian children spend their afternoons in the Champs Elysées or in the Tuileries Gardens. They suck unwholesome sweetmeats, which they buy at the little stalls, and they hear vulgar conversations

which are even more coarse than those they hear at the Punch and Judy shows. They fill their little lungs with the poisonous dust raised by the carriages and with that of the little pies which they manufacture with their spades and buckets. Their absolute unconsciousness of their own danger is pathetic. Many of them take back with them to their homes the microbe of the disease which is to carry them off a few days later. Our race must be endowed with an uncommon vitality, and with extraordinary ascensional force, to be able to withstand so triumphantly all the destructive elements which are allowed to enter into its organism. How greatly its task would be facilitated by the establishment of the nursery where the little ones could be better cared for, better educated, and consequently have a better start in life. Ever since yesterday I have had the picture of this delightful nursery before my eyes. I only wish I could show it just as it is to a few young French mothers. It might, perhaps, give them the idea of creating some schools in which capable doctors should teach them about the child and the way it should be treated. This would be a fine enterprise and an extremely practical one. There are plenty of married women and girls of the lower middle class who would willingly become educators of children, if they were placed above domestics, treated with consideration, and well paid. Architects, too, might be induced to introduce the nursery in their plans. In the provinces, at any rate, there is plenty of room in the house for the nursery. The fashion of "afternoon tea" and many other fashions, too, have crossed the Channel, why should we not have the nursery? The Frenchwoman would then take an interest in the species and she would do her utmost to have good specimens. That would be great progress for our country. We have maternal love, we should then have the love of maternity.

. . . . . .

Whilst making lines of dots in a mechanical way, my thoughts travelled on from this early education to the instruction of children. In that, I am delighted to say that we are

indisputably superior to the English. After the nursery period in England, during which the children acquire a quantity of useful information of all sorts, there is a certain continuity in their intellectual development. They have governesses or tutors, they are sent to school or college, but the parents do not busy themselves personally with their children's studies. After helping them to put their foot in the stirrup, they leave them free to trot, gallop, or even give up the ride, according to their fancy. They seem to take more interest now in their victories in outdoor sports than in their school victories. This is no doubt due to the instinct of race. The result is that the standard of instruction in the Unknown Isle is at a much lower level than in France and that the masses are remarkably ignorant.

In France, on the contrary, parents of all classes take a passionate interest in their children's studies. They spare nothing to facilitate things for them. They delight in teaching them themselves, they cram them with knowledge, and frequently help, quite unconsciously, in overworking their brains. The success of their children becomes a question of personal pride to the parents. A father can scarcely forgive the son who fails to pass his examinations. Many mothers accompany their daughters to lectures and lessons, and work with their sons at home lessons. Women of the working and lower middle class see that their children know their lessons. They like to see a cross or a little medal occasionally on their child's black linen pinafore. On Sundays, the working man will take his youngsters to the museums, and I have often noticed that, by a sort of divine intuition, he stops in front of the best things.

In the French hive, intellectual work is intense. In our early education we may make a bad start, but we catch up and soon make up for lost time. Only God and ourselves know how much the effort costs us.

It seems to me then that the English have *number* and the French *quality*. It may not be modest for me to say this, but I feel sure that our neighbours would not care to change lots with us. It is by means of these two forces that Nature

works for our mutual progress and for universal progress. It seems as though she is endeavouring to amalgamate them. We should like to know what she wishes to produce. Those who live longest will see.

St. Olaf.

When I am visiting in an English house, I realise all that differentiates us. It is something enormous. I am most careful in all I do and say, but a single speech, an expression or a criticism continually betrays my French mentality and temperament. It sounds like a wrong note falling in the ambient harmony and to my great dismay I hear it distinctly. My St. Olaf hosts are cosmopolitan enough to be amused by it. When the domestics are present I am very careful. Thanks to the snobbishness which exists, in all classes of this nation, English servants are more severe than their employers, and I would not shock them upon any account. I endeavour to keep off forbidden topics in my conversation, but there are so many of these in England that I have the greatest difficulty and, with true human perversity, I am constantly tempted by them. After bridge and when Mrs. Baring has retired, Edith, Rodney, and I go to the library. The young man smokes his pipe, we two some harmless cigarettes, and we then talk freely. This evening, Edith has been talking about her stay at Avranches, the little town where she was sent to learn French, because living was inexpensive there.

"It was there that I learnt to know your country and to love it," she said. "I stayed with an officer's widow. She only had a very small pension from the Government and so she took a few English boarders in order to be able to educate her three daughters. I had a spotlessly clean little room with a brick floor. It was very charming with its white muslin curtains, its two arm-chairs, its cane chairs, its bulky chest of drawers, and its old desk. In the winter, a bright wood fire lighted it up. On the walls were lithographs representing Napoleon at Eylau and at Austerlitz. Would you believe that whenever I glanced at your hero I blushed!"

"The blush was a credit to you!" I observed, smiling.

"The remembrance of the hideous way in which we captured him made me quite uncomfortable. There were various other dear old things around me," she continued, "a statue of the Virgin, the portrait of St. Vincent de Paul, a holy-water vessel, and a branch of box that had been blessed on Palm Sunday. These Catholic objects, which I saw for the first time, gave me great pleasure. My hostess and her daughters, with the help of one servant, worked from morning to night and did everything. We were all very gay and lively and there were excellent little dishes on the table. The conversation at meal times was my delight and surprise. Yes, I was very happy during that year at Avranches, although I had no tennis, no outdoor sports. The happiness was due to the gay French character. Ah, that is a wonderful gift you have all received. I do wish we were not so dull and insipid," she added, with a droll expression.

"You would not be if you were not so terribly afraid of being incorrect. English propriety seems to me very much like the mowing-machine that the gardener drags over your lawns. As soon as a few little flowers are impertinent enough to put in an appearance, their little heads are promptly cut off and the lawns remain hopelessly green, so that the eyes get tired of looking at them, as they are monotonous."

"Yes, that is just it, and so we escape to our beloved France, where the little flowers are allowed to grow," said Edith in a melancholy tone of voice.

"I have a horror of the words gentleman and lady that we are for ever saying," she added.

"Fortunately Mrs. Baring is not here," I remarked, very much amused.

"Yes, would she not be horrified?" put in Rodney, laughing.

"Oh, this conversation is not fit for mother's ears, of course," said my friend, with that touch of humour which always amuses me.

"It seems to me, though, that you have adopted our word gentleman," remarked Rodney.

"No, it is naturalised now with us, we do not write it in italics

at present. We really did not need the word, as *gentilhomme* is its equivalent. Our word is too aristocratic though for Republicans. Gentleman is a sort of compromise and we only use it in its moral sense. With you, it only means a well-born man, does it not?"

"Yes, because we consider that the well-born man *ought* to have attained the moral perfection and the physical refinement which together are our ideal. The individual of low origin always betrays himself in some way, either by his want of tact, his lack of self-control or of education. He may have noble sentiments, intellectual culture, or he may even be a genius, but he is not a gentleman."

"Nature does not produce this fine specimen of humanity all at once," I said. "It requires at least three generations."

"Well, that is why we think so highly of birth. Among our best statesmen, there are some who are not well-born and this can be told by their very policy. With us, every man's ambition is to be, or at least to seem to be, a gentleman."

"Yes, and that really is most objectionable," put in Edith warmly.

"There is a good side to this ambition," I remarked. "It acts as a powerful brake. I had an instance of this last year, at Simley Hall. Two children were playing in a boat on the pool. The boy, with his legs apart, kept rocking the boat in a way that must have been rather disagreeable. The little girl begged him to stop, but, by way of teasing her, he rocked more violently still.

" 'Frank, you are not a gentleman!' she exclaimed in exasperation.

"The boy blushed to the roots of his hair and stopped immediately. Such an accusation would have had no effect whatever on a French boy and I regretted it in my heart."

"That's all very well," said Edith, "but I still think that our education is a horrible restraint on us. I am sure you think the same thing."

"Yes, but I also think that such restraint is necessary for you."

"Oh, come now!" protested Edith.

"With your enormous population you are obliged to walk along with your arms down. Your Colonials are gay, communicative, and much more brilliant. I noticed them at your Jubilee. They stood out in relief in your crowds, like men of another species. They appear vulgar to you and you seem to them stiff and petrified."

"That is just what we are!" exclaimed Edith, in an exasperated way.

"Well, that keeps you from getting too excited. Over-excitement for people of your temperament is dangerous. Remember the night of the Mafeking victory. Nature knows what is good for us and we do not know ourselves. As a matter of fact, my dear Union Jack, you would not really like to be any less correct."

"You are quite right," observed Rodney, mischievously. "She is a Tory to the finger tips."

Edith coloured up.

"That may be," she said, "but all the same I get cramp sometimes and feel the need of a stretch."

"Well, you have the Continent at hand. Europe is the stretching-ground for England. You can always come and trample on our lawns. They are badly cut, but there are plenty of flowers and they are very fragrant."

"Yes, I will certainly go to them," she said and, lifting her arms above her head, she clasped her fingers nervously, with her palms outwards, at the back of her neck.

"In the meantime," she added smiling, "I am glad to have captured a Frenchwoman for a little while."

The clock struck half-past eleven and I rose. My hostess followed my example. We wished Rodney good night. He walked with us to the door and opened it for us. In that attitude of the Englishman, there is something more than the homage due to woman. There is a sort of manly protection always in his attitude which delights me and which I like better than the French custom of kissing our hands.

Edith had never before betrayed her state of mind so frankly.

It was certainly a state of mind that would have horrified Mrs. Baring. Life in a small suburban place, the second-rate society with which she had been surrounded, must have acted as a cruel curb to the natural play of her mind and of her instincts. It must have been very difficult for her to breathe in such a grey, heavy atmosphere. She certainly "needs a change," and a great change. The more I see of her, the more surprised I am that she has not married, and all the more so as a rich man here thinks so much of the beauty of race. What an admirable lady of the manor she would make. She looks so distinguished always in evening dress. What a treasure she would be to an Englishman with the same tastes, for she loves horses, sports of all kinds, and politics. Besides all this she must devote herself to other people. She goes out of her way all the time for the sake of this person or that person, and even for the sake of the animals. She is prepared for anything, and nothing delights her more than to organise a picnic, make all the arrangements when travelling, or get up treats and excursions for children. She is clear-headed and, thanks to having been brought up as her brother's comrade, she has a certain masculine skill in all she undertakes. Like so many Englishwomen she is hardy and has good muscles, she is reticent with regard to her own secret feelings, but she is cutting and even caustic in her speeches and she has certain inborn prejudices. Middle-class people and American women are her two pet aversions. She makes fun of the latter in a pitiless way. She criticises their accent and their manners, and she is absolutely unjust towards them. There is nothing more implacable than this rivalry of race. Edith is always somewhat dignified when with people of her own rank, but she is very affable towards those beneath her in social position. I evidently inspire her with a very curious sentiment. She likes the Frenchwoman in me, because of her love for France. Then she is inquisitive about me as a novelist, and she pities me for my solitude. I might very well be her mother, but she treats me as an elder sister. When we are talking together I forget that I am an old woman. Certain young people have this power over me.

In spite of our intimacy Edith has never told me anything about her girlhood. It seems to me that this is not due to ordinary reserve, but that something has happened which has made her close her heart. She once told me that she had been engaged at the age of nineteen and that her fiancé had died a fortnight before setting sail for Europe. I feel intuitively, though, that there is something else beside this, a more living sorrow. When she smiles it is only with her lips. The smile is never to be seen in the blue pupils of her eyes, whilst in their velvety depths there is always a gravity that is touching. She usually holds her head erect in a proud way, but at times it seems to bend under an invisible weight. Such weaknesses never last long and she is always doubly energetic afterwards or doubly satirical. Sometimes I wonder whether Providence has singled her out for carrying through some great work of charity. I should be very sorry if such were the case. I know, of course, that in altruism there are joys which are exquisite and very deep, joys which we common mortals will never know. I feel sure, though, that Edith does not ask for these, and that a simple grain of human happiness would be much more to her mind. I hope with all my soul that she may have it.

St. Olaf.

It is only when in England that one realises all that sports mean and all their *raison d'être*. They create an ardent emulation, an exteriorisation of youthfulness, and a movement which seems to give light. Nature, in her dealings with our neighbours, has acted like a mother with a family so large that she has to discipline it more strictly. Her best way of disciplining it here seemed to be by sports. These are a stimulant and at the same time a brake, and an education. In order to stand their own climate and to accomplish the enormous work which devolves on them, the English need a great deal of food, a great deal of oxygen, and a great deal of exercise. Sports enable them to acquire these elements of force. The Scotch, for instance, owe a great deal to golf, their popular and national game, which dates back to time immemorial. Their links

stretch out over a vast extent of country, frequently by the side of the sea. For centuries, their fishermen, peasants, and lower classes, armed with a club, have spent hours driving a little ball over the ground into the various holes. All this exercises the eye and the limbs, and, at the same time, the players are filling their lungs with the salt, vivifying air of the sea. All this makes robust men, so much wealth for the British Empire.

With the expense of force necessary to the game, the various emotions that it causes, and the ambitions that it inspires, such sport exercises a wholesome influence and keeps the body young. It also forms the character. The inhabitants of the Unknown Isle owe their *sang-froid*, their clear-headedness in action, and their horror of defeat largely to their sports. The exercise makes muscle, and the spirit of sport makes gentlemen. All that is petty, all that is not strictly in accordance with rule is pronounced "not sport," and this idea remains with many Englishmen and holds them back a long time when they are on the brink of forfeiting their honour.

Intellectual men in England deplore this passion for sport, as it interferes considerably in progress with regard to study, science, and art. The population of Great Britain is surely large enough, though, to supply leaders of sport for the whole world without any detriment to its cerebral power. Its athletes and its women walkers are nothing less than this. With the help of these leaders, Nature will go on preparing man for fresh efforts. He must make himself a more enduring and more agile body. He is really working at this unconsciously.

Wimbledon and Wimbledon Park have, of course, every kind of grounds for the various sports, and the scenery around is of rare beauty. Yesterday I was present at the tennis matches, one for men and one for women. The names of the champions had drawn a great many people.

They had come from all the neighbourhood round and even from London. I found this very entertaining.

In an English crowd, light colours predominate, so that

from afar it appears more brilliant than a French crowd. On examining the women nearer, though, one cannot help feeling surprised at the inferior quality of their clothes. They wear cheap material, poor ribbon, terribly artificial flowers, common feathers, and ornaments on their neck and arms which are positively barbarous. All this reveals very primitive taste, a great desire to make a show. On the stand, I noticed a few dark groups, and discovered that these were the sportswomen. What curious types they are, these sportswomen! The unconscious art with which they render themselves hideous, their absolute ignorance of all that is elegant and feminine makes them appear peculiarly original-looking and interesting. I watched them and they certainly fascinated me, these leaders in a life in which only a little ball exists. The little ball causes them all the excitement of a struggle and it gives them the hope and the sensation of victory. They wear short dresses, sack jackets, cotton or flannel blouses, sailor hats or soft felts, their hair is drawn behind their ears and plaited as tightly as possible, their complexion is hardened and tanned by the air and the sun, their eyes are piercing, but without any beam in them. They are eyes with a fixed gaze like those which see nothing but the goal. Their large, well-shaped hands are tanned to such a degree that this serves them for gloves, but they are ornamented with massive rings. There is one thing coquettish about them and that is the knot of their neckties, a well-tied knot, but of course very masculine looking. In spite of their anti-feminine get-up, there is a certain distinction about most of them. They look ladies. I imagine that they would have simple, straightforward characters and that they would bring into every-day life that "spirit of sport" of which I have already spoken.

The men's game was really interesting, even to a person ignorant of the rules. I was not too excited by the game itself, and could enjoy the classical beauty of the movements of these athletes, brought to a perfection of flexibility and harmony by constant training. I was, perhaps, the only person in the great throng admiring all this. The crowd, silent and motion-

less, was breathlessly watching every point of the game with admirably controlled but intense passion. The Latin is a gambler, but the Saxon is a better. Beside the interest excited by any kind of a contest, there is always the excitement of a bet made with someone. Victory or defeat is therefore felt by everyone, and, after the battle, the reflection of it can be seen on the different faces.

Yesterday, for the hundredth time, I noticed the peculiar coquetry of the Englishman in all things relating to sport. The champions and most of the players arrived on the ground with long overcoats of thick white flannel with large pearl buttons. They also wore wide mufflers of white flannel. All this was very *chic* and very becoming, as they knew. They took their tea like this and then paraded about in front of the groups of women, showing off, less unconsciously than the peacock does perhaps, but evidently with the same end in view. What a jester Nature is after all!

I had never seen a woman's match before and it certainly was not a beautiful sight. The game, as it is played in France, between talking and flirting, could give no idea of this. Instantaneous photographs alone could show the wild gestures of such a game. The violent swing of the arm makes the women kick up their legs occasionally inconceivably high, and such a disarticulation of the human body is both painful and ridiculous. Some of the women in their excitement put out their tongue while playing. All this was so droll that on one occasion I burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

"What are you laughing at?" asked Edith very quickly

"Can you not see—those legs and arms," I exclaimed.

"But this is all sport," she explained, astonished. "A Frenchwoman can never understand," she added, with a shade of disdain in her voice.

Ah, no, a Frenchwoman would certainly never consent to disjoint herself like that even if it were to win Paradise. I looked round and no one was even smiling. The humoristic and satirical sense, so keen with the English, did not appear to be affected in the least by the sight of these women players,

who looked like so many marionettes moving by invisible wires. No, all this was sport.

My opinion is that the only becoming game for a woman is archery. Under the Empire it was in favour for a time with us. There is nothing so graceful as the bending of the bow. I love to hear the whizzing of the arrow speeding through the air and the dull sound of it as it touches the target. I love the idea of the effort concentrated towards the symbolic golden spot which marks the goal, the ideal goal. Archery is no longer fashionable, but it will come back into favour some day. There are so few members of the Archery Club at Wimbledon that no special ground is rented. The targets are put up in a field that is either lent or hired for the occasion. On field days a tent is put up for tea, a few chairs are carried there, and that is all. I have been with Edith several times to these contests and have made a study of the Englishwoman as compared with the Frenchwoman. It was evident that there was no thought of effect among the women I saw. They arrived, wearing the most extraordinary hats, either too simple or too befeathered, with badly hanging skirts and shapeless blouses, a leathern belt round their waists to which were hung their quivers, a note-book for the scores, and a something for wiping the arrows. Thus equipped they placed themselves at the regulation distance from the target, bent the bow, took aim, let the arrow fly, emptied their quiver, and then, without a word or smile, walked towards the target with the strides of gymnasts, picked up the fallen arrows, counted the score and wrote it down. They then returned to their place and went through the same exercise with mathematical precision.

I saw women of forty and fifty years of age there. One of them was a grandmother and she amused me immensely. She was absolutely unconscious of the effect she produced with her arrow and quiver, her shapeless figure and white hair. She sent arrow after arrow with a rapidity and sureness that were almost automatic. The pleasure this gave her seemed to make her look younger. An Englishwoman only gives up a game when she feels that she is no longer

equal to it. A Frenchwoman gives it up when she feels that she is no longer seen to advantage playing it. I pictured to myself Parisian women, with their well-made dresses moulded on to them, moving slowly and gracefully as they stretch their bows, taking aim, their ideas not concentrated and their hands nervous, laughing and chattering around the targets. All that is very pretty to watch, but it certainly is not sport.

Sport has come into our habits and customs, into our very life and into our blood, like a kind of serum. We observe its mathematical rules, but we bring to it our faults and our good qualities. We put passion, spirit, and even soul into it, a crowd of elements that really have nothing to do with it. These elements have sometimes given us the victory, though, and they may do so again. Saxon sport will always be more correct, more manly and rougher. Latin sport will be more refined, there will be more warmth about it. In order to get the desired harmony it seems to me that they should complete each other.

St. Olaf.

Edith always declares that, in order to appreciate Wimbledon one must go to London. I have tried this experiment several times, as these little journeys amuse me. We walk down the hill and take one of the numerous trains, the underground if possible. We first go through some pretty country scenery and then arrive at the first human agglomerations. We pass quite close to numbers of little grey houses which are very ugly, with small yards in which clothes are hanging out to dry. Farther on are streets with endless rows of better houses built of red brick, all joined together and of the same style. We then cross the Thames, either at high or low water, and soon reach the outskirts. For a few minutes we see the huge metropolis, just long enough to be greatly impressed by it and then all at once we dive underground. We arrive at the stations at full speed, stop frequently, people get in and out quickly, but there is no noise and no confusion. The doors are banged to and we

continue our journey until we reach Sloane Street, Victoria, or Charing Cross. We usually get out at one of these three stations.

Edith and I went to London this afternoon and the heat was suffocating. When once we came out into the open air, we each gave a sigh of relief.

"How hideous our underground is!" exclaimed Edith. "Fortunately we have the Tube to compete with your elegant Metropolitan."

"Do not be ungrateful," I said. "The English ants were the first, I think, to hollow out these underground railroads, these tunnels which Nature needed in order to move us about more quickly. What efforts of thought and muscle they represent! Just imagine how many stones must have been carried and how many spadefuls of earth must have been taken away by these poor feelers we call arms. And to think that they worked for the masses, for the future, for you and for me."

Edith looked at me in amazement.

"I certainly never thought of it, like that," she said.

"No, we live our life, like so many children. We are still incapable of appreciating life in itself. We have to be as old as I am and to live as completely outside ourselves if we are to see things which give such infinite value and such grist to life. I find myself sending silent thanks sometimes to the hands that paved and beautified the roads along which I walk. I wonder whether these thanks reach their destination. That, of course, I cannot tell, but I have the sensation that they are not lost."

Edith put her arm suddenly through mine.

"You have no idea how much good you do me," she said. "You make me realise that I have always been walking round and round the same circle, like a horse in the riding-school. It is no wonder that I am often disgusted with everything."

Just at this moment we were hustled by the crowd and separated.

"Impossible to philosophise in the Strand," I said. "It is too narrow. Our boulevards are better for that."

"Yes," agreed Edith laughing. "Let us keep our philosophy for St. Olaf."

We went into two of those huge shops which are the nearest approach to our Louvre and Bon Marché. They are very different certainly, for John Bull knows nothing about *chiffons* and it is very evident that he does not understand them. He has no eye for colour, he folds them badly, he handles the frills and furbelows awkwardly, and his window-dressing is a proof that his taste is very primitive. In Paris, it is the object itself which attracts attention, but here it is the price. It is always marked in enormous figures and that alone is hideous. Madame La France is infinitely superior to her neighbour in all this, but her neighbour acknowledges this willingly. I was once more struck by the indifference of the salesmen and women. They are neither interested in you nor in your purchases, and they do not pronounce a word more than is necessary. They are as correct and dry as machines. Whether this is good or bad, and whether it is better like this, I cannot say.

Mentally I compared our sales-people. They certainly realise the value of time less than the English, but they are more generous with themselves and with their trouble. They love their goods, whatever these may be, and they praise them up skilfully and delicately. They put something into their work which ennobles it, a little art, a little of their own soul. Their graciousness is not always there to order, it varies and depends largely on the kindliness of the customer. Their smile or their few words of thanks will leave you sometimes with a pleasant feeling. John Bull would think that too much. I am inclined to think that it is not too much. At any rate, on looking round in the London shop to-day, I had a sensation of coldness and of commonplaceness, such as I have never felt in the Louvre, the Bon Marché, nor even in the most insignificant of our shops.

The ugliness of Regent Street always strikes me afresh. On leaving it we made our way towards New Bond Street, in search of a cup of tea. In London, society women lunch or dine at restaurants more than Parisian women would, but they generally prefer tea in their own homes. It is, perhaps, on this account that the tea-rooms are somewhat lacking in elegance and comfort. Some of these are kept by so-called ladies, who are more

distinguished for their long sweeping dresses than for the beverage they serve.

New Bond Street has a specialty that is worth noting. It might be called Oracle Street. There are any number of fortune-tellers, palmists, and such-like people in this street. Their signs are to be seen side by side with those of dressmakers and dentists. In Paris, they usually live in rather out-of-the-way places and people go to them secretly. In London, they have chosen their abodes in the most elegant part of the city. Many of them live over the tea shops. The fee for a consultation is a guinea or half a guinea. Some of these soothsayers have become quite noted and it appears that their profession is very lucrative. This does not surprise me, as the Saxon has kept more traits of primitive man than the Latin. There is a fund of hereditary superstition in him, a childlike credulousness and a veritable passion for all that is occult. This explains the anachronism of all these fortune-tellers and palmists, etc., being able to exist in the very heart of the English metropolis.

I was just pondering over all this when I was struck by a sign indicating "The Old Oak-Tree Tea Rooms." I wondered what the old oak had to do with tea and I felt inclined to go in and see for myself.

"At your own risk then," said Edith.

"At my own risk," I answered. It certainly was a curious place. We went up a straight staircase and found ourselves in a room looking on to the street. There were two others looking on to yards. The chairs and tables were very heavy and old-fashioned looking. They were of dark wood imitating old oak. Dutch china and vases, verdure, flowers, and painted glass windows ornamented all the rooms. The "tea girls" were dressed in red cloth with very short skirts. They wore white linen head-dresses, blue aprons that were patched, and huge white sabots. The effect of all this together and the noise of the sabots were most extraordinary. One of them looked like a Flemish girl. She was fair and had very regular, classical features. An invisible orchestra accompanied the prosaic rite of tea-drinking with a strange weird music. The hab-

itués of this extraordinary place evidently belonged to the middle class. There were several couples of those intellectual flirts that are to be met everywhere here. Those who set up for being artistic and æsthetic are my delight. The man usually wears his smooth, rather long hair parted in the middle, he has sloping shoulders, a muddled complexion, his ideas are probably muddled also, and he has a vague stare. The girl is more frequently dark than fair. She is often very beautiful, but always strange-looking with an Oriental gleam in her eyes. Her movements are slow and studied and her general expression languid. She wears immense hats, light-coloured dresses of soft material, extraordinary belts adorned with impossible *cabochons*. Her bracelets, necklace, and rings have evidently been bought in a big shop and are outrageously exotic. These couples appear to be saying ineffable things to each other, they seem to admire each other immensely and to live in each other's eyes. They are English people that Nature has grafted in a freak. The mystery is where the graft has come from. Probably it is from some distant colony.

I glanced at Edith and made a sign to her to notice the specimens of humanity present.

"Horrible creatures!" she remarked with a comic expression. "Do you not prefer sportswomen?"

"They are certainly more wholesome," I answered, "but they are not so curious and not as interesting."

The tea and scones were delicious. They did not need the support of the old oak and the fancy costumes. Dutch dresses and sabots in New Bond Street are somewhat incongruous, but it is impossible to fathom the caprices of our neighbours, the English.

We took the underground for returning to Wimbledon. Our train was full of the City men whom I have surnamed "Baggies," because, instead of the leather portfolio which Frenchmen carry, these men always have a leather bag. I was struck, as I always am, by the expression of utter weariness on their faces.

Some of them looked as though they could scarcely turn the pages of their newspapers. Their Parisian confrères never

have that worn-out appearance. In their day, which is relatively short, these Englishmen have to get through an enormous amount of work and, consequently, the strain is very great both for mind and body. As I watched them I could not help anticipating their precious week-end, which ensures them at least thirty-six hours of rest and peace.

I always admire the way in which Englishmen get in and out of a train. There is never any awkwardness or hurry. It seems to me always that their movements are regulated more mathematically than ours.

On all the platforms of the underground, there are women and girls to be seen wearing very light-coloured dresses, frequently white ones, feather boas and picture hats. They ride on the tops of the omnibuses in the same style of dress. The English women have no sense of the harmony of things.

The walls of the underground are of course covered with advertisements. Such posters are neither as pretty nor as artistic as ours, but they are more ingenious and more startling. They make a brutal impression on the brain. After a week spent in England, one comes away with a whole collection of these. I have *Scrubbs' Ammonia* and *Sunlight Soap* fixed permanently behind my forehead. A few years ago, the great blot on the poster of *Stephens' Ink* caught my eye. I bought a bottle of it and since then I have always used it. This is certainly a good instance of suggestion. All these commonplace advertisements, absurd as they sometimes are, have their purpose. They have to produce a little effect of some kind, they help life.

Edith is right in saying that London makes anyone appreciate Wimbledon. We drove up the hill from the station and, after the mixed crowd of New Bond Street, with its somnambulists and fortune-tellers, it was delightful to be back in the country, to breathe in the air from the Common, to see the beautiful clusters of yellow laburnum, and to go along green lanes with flowers in the hedges. It seemed to me as though I were undergoing a kind of purification. The sight of St. Olaf took away my last vestiges of weariness. Ah yes, there is something good about the suburbs of a city.

I had an idea that Rodney was in love and, indeed, I should have been sorry if such had not been the case. In the evening, when we are all three sitting in the library, it often happens that he leaves us to ourselves, that he drops out of the conversation. I often notice that at such times his face softens and I fancy that he is evoking some feminine figure to his mind. I always look for the love-light in the eyes of an Anglo-Saxon. The sign is to be seen on the lips of a Frenchman. I had detected this love-light in Rodney's eyes and my curiosity as a novelist was on the alert.

After dinner yesterday evening, Edith received a letter which surprised her. "Ruby in London, with her aunt!" she exclaimed. "She wants to know when she can come to see us. I feel inclined to fetch her to-morrow and keep her here for the week-end. What do you say, mother?"

"Yes, do by all means," replied Mrs. Baring promptly. Strangely enough I had the sensation that the news affected the young man standing up at my side.

"A good idea!" he exclaimed, with a joyful intonation in his voice.

"Ruby!" I repeated. "What a pretty name!"

"It is an old English name," explained my hostess, "quite out of date at present, so that it is scarcely ever used except when it happens to be already in the family."

Rodney's behaviour during the rest of the evening was an ample revelation. I was inwardly amused by the way in which he betrayed himself, by the gay notes in his voice, by his absent-mindedness at bridge, and by the little words of endearment he lavished on his sister in his gratitude.

When Edith came into my room with me that night, she said: "I want you to meet Ruby Talbot. She is a girl we are rather proud of, and it is very likely she will be one of our family in the end."

"Is your brother engaged to her?" I asked.

"No, only in love. The Talbots are our oldest friends.

Until this year there has only been a sort of friendship between Rodney and Ruby. In February, though, they both spent a week visiting in the house of some mutual friends and the harm was done. He came back home an altered man, absent-minded, uncertain, altogether different. I guessed what was the matter. I fancy he has not yet asked the fatal question and hence his uneasiness. I am quite tranquil in my mind, for she has always cared for him."

"Is she pretty?"

"Very pretty—according to our English taste. And then she is by no means an ordinary girl. Her education has prepared her admirably for becoming the wife of Rodney, who has to make his own career. Her father is one of our great social economists and for the last three years she has been his secretary. She is, therefore, well up in social questions. Beside this, she has more or less brought up her three brothers and four sisters, and that has been an experience for her which a young girl rarely has. She has no money of course. I cannot imagine why nice people persist in being poor," she added, with a shade of annoyance in her voice. "My brother cannot marry yet unless my mother should come into her money, or my uncle should take him into partnership. Uncle Richard does not believe in early marriages, because they increase the population of our country, so that he is sure not to make matters easy for his nephew. When an Englishman takes it into his head to do anything on principle he sticks to his text, even if he has to sacrifice all his family to his ideas. I wish that Rodney could be engaged at any rate. I am arranging for them to have two days together and they must make the best of them. I think it is really rather praiseworthy on my part," added Edith, "for Rodney is my only chum. I don't want another life to be spoiled though in our family."

She gave a little nervous laugh on alluding thus to herself. She then put her hand into mine, to wish me good night, and I clasped it sympathetically. The following day Edith went to London. At tea time a cab drove up to the porch, bringing a little week-end trunk, and a young girl sprang lightly to the

ground. I was in the hall and my eyes took in the little scene. I saw the girl's elegant figure, her refined features, her pretty warm-coloured fair hair, her eyes of reddish brown, her dazzling complexion, and then her blue serge dress and cream straw hat trimmed with flowers. She seemed to me charming, and I quite understood that friendship with such a girl must be very pleasant. I remembered Rodney's words and I was not surprised at his superb disdain with regard to society women and *demi-mondaines*.

Edith must have sung my praises to her guest for, after kissing Mrs. Baring, she turned to me with a charming smile and told me how glad she was to make my acquaintance. The speech was commonplace, but I felt the sincerity of her words and the warmth she put into them, and this gave me pleasure. At tea time, in spite of the difference of age and the little we knew of each other, we were soon talking like old friends.

I spoke of this later on to Edith.

"Yes," she said, "but it was just the same with me. I remember now the pleasure I felt when I first saw you. I needed a Frenchwoman just then, for those dreadful Yankees that I met every day were on my nerves."

"Edith," I said, smiling, "I fancy you must some time have had a rival who was American."

I had said this quite carelessly, but I saw that my words had accidentally hit the mark. She flinched for a moment and looked away, but she was soon herself again.

"A rival!" she repeated, disdainfully. "Oh no, nothing of the kind. Americans make me gnash my teeth, because they are not in tune yet, but that is all. In another two hundred years, I am sure I should consider them charming," she added with comic gravity.

"And yet it was Mrs. Cahart, an American woman, who introduced us," I said.

"Yes and I am very grateful to her for that. She is an excellent woman, so good and so straightforward. I assure you that I always thoroughly appreciate those qualities wherever I find them," added Edith.

"More particularly when the goodness and the straightforwardness are English, though?" I ventured to say.

"Well, when the people who have those qualities talk English correctly and have not an impossible accent," allowed my friend, with that pleasant look of hers which frequently modifies her caustic remarks.

Rodney is right. His sister is more "ancient England" than she herself imagines. I cannot help wondering whether there is not some private grievance which inspires, or at any rate keeps up, this antipathy for her American cousins.

All the rest of the afternoon I was impatient to see Rodney arrive, just as a spectator at the theatre likes to see the lover come on the scene. I waited until the last minute possible before going to the drawing-room, but I found him there alone nevertheless. I looked at him critically. He appeared to me very manly and distinguished-looking in his well-cut clothes. I had the sensation that I was not precisely the welcome person, but I perfectly well understood that, when a man is in love, it is trying to see the wrong person enter the room. Miss Talbot soon followed though with Edith.

"Very glad to see you, Ruby," he said, advancing to meet her.

"I hope you are," she replied gaily, shaking hands with him.

In spite of their perfect self-control, I caught that delicate emotion which is caused by love when it first approaches, an emotion which is never surpassed by anything in the world. Ruby looked charming in her simple, white evening dress. It was very English and certainly could not have cost much. It had probably been made at home and it was so cut that it gave her plenty of freedom of movement. The Irish lace yoke was square and her throat, emerging from this, was milky white. Her hair was slightly curly and touched with gold over her forehead. She was wearing a gold chain with a pendant set with turquoises, and a ring and bracelets set with the same stones. I do not fancy anyone would have wished to see this girl dressed by Doucet or by Paquin.

"How long are you staying in London, Ruby?" asked Rodney, as soon as we were at table.

"A fortnight at Aunt Lucy's and I hope to stay a week or two with Mrs. Nerwind. She is going to write to father that she absolutely needs me."

"Mrs. Nerwind of Portman Square?" I asked in amazement.

"Yes, she is a very dear friend of ours. Do you know her?"

"Yes."

"Oh!" exclaimed Edith and her brother together.

"How strange!" put in Mrs. Baring.

"Mrs. Nerwind always stays at the hotel where I live in Paris!" I explained. "For several years I had seen her arrive always in December and appear again in April. Finally we made each other's acquaintance and we have seen a great deal of each other. I intended to call on her during my stay in London."

"Oh, I shall be glad to see you there, when I am with her," said the young girl. "The coincidence is rather strange though, is it not?"

"It is only another proof that the meeting and grouping of individuals is not the work of chance. Providence attends to our affairs much more than we imagine."

This remark slipped out without any premeditation. I regretted it immediately, for I saw that I had shocked Mrs. Baring. By way of changing the subject I asked Rodney when he was going to take us on the river as he had promised.

"On Monday," he answered. "To-morrow we leave the Thames to the Saturday people. I shall work all the afternoon at some important business we have on hand, and then I can take a whole day off. I have told Sir Richard and he only grumbled."

Boating is evidently the young man's favourite sport. He was one of the best oars at Cambridge and one of the winners at Henley. I fancy he would own a whole fleet of boats if his means allowed of it. He has four, at present. His latest acquisition is a boat constructed from his own designs and given him by his uncle. He described its wonderful advantages.

"What name have you given to this masterpiece?" I asked.

"It is not baptised yet," he replied. "There are so many godmothers for it that I do not know which name to choose."

The words hit their mark. I saw a light gleam in Miss Talbot's reddish brown-eyes.

"So many godmothers!" she replied with a pretty pretence of anger. "Don't be conceited, Rodney."

"I hope we shall have fine weather on Monday," said Edith. "We will have a perfect little fête. We will lunch on the boat and stop at Cosy Farm for tea. Pierre de Coulevain," she continued, turning to me, "we will introduce one of the latest products of modern society, a lady farmer from the Agricultural School. Miss Norcroft is a lady by birth and education. She has put all her money into a farm that she attends to herself and with great success, too. Her fruit and her vegetables are greatly appreciated in London. She had a gold medal recently for her strawberries. With us, there are so many more women than men, that they are obliged to look after themselves. We consider, too, that a lady may take up the most humble work without any loss of dignity."

"And you are right!" I answered with conviction. "To us is due a revolution which helped the whole of the world to make progress. We overthrew I do not know how many thrones, and yet with all that we have not managed to shake off crowds of ridiculous prejudices. In France a woman still loses caste by work as well as by vice."

"Oh, it was just the same here until about forty years ago," said Mrs. Baring, with her strict sense of justice. "And then all at once an evolution began to take place in our ideas, in our way of looking at things. This evolution has been so rapid that at times I scarcely know where I am," she added, with a pathetic little smile.

"We have lady milliners and lady dressmakers now, and even lady cooks," put in Ruby, in a jesting tone.

"Yes, but with most of them it is all bluff," remarked Rodney.

"Well Miss Norcroft is quite genuine."

I was noticing Miss Talbot all the time that we were talking. There is something in her intelligent face which betokens deep

feeling. It is evident, too, that she has plenty of will power and firmness of purpose. I was soon quite sure that she was in love with Rodney. When the sweets were served, she invited him to have some of the tart which was placed in front of her. He did not, of course, refuse, and she cut him a slice very daintily. The maid passed him the plate, but I noticed that she watched it until it reached its destination and this almost maternal care for his material welfare delighted me. Strangely enough it reminded me of a little incident which occurred when I was only about sixteen years of age. An elderly Englishman we knew was in despair on losing his wife.

"For forty years," he said, regretfully, "she has never given me a thing to eat that I have not liked." This was the highest praise he could find, and at the time I thought it odious. My mother told me that I should understand later on all that he meant. I understand at present and, unless I am very much mistaken, Ruby will have that same valuable intuition and I congratulate Rodney inwardly.

At bridge, that evening, in drawing for partners, three times over they were told off to play together. Rodney exclaimed "hurrah," in a triumphant tone, and a faint blush stole to Ruby's cheeks. In order to prove the well-known proverb in the wrong, the lovers won nearly all the time, and even when we had magnificent cards in our hands we lost over and over again.

Later on we went into the library as usual, and Ruby fetched her little guitar which, at Edith's request, she had brought with her. She sang us some old songs with taste and feeling such as one rarely hears in the execution of an Englishwoman. Rodney listened with the greatest pleasure. Fortunately he, too, is musical. It is always such a pity when one of a married couple does not comprehend the other one. It seems to me that these two have happiness in store for them and I thank God for this.

St. Olaf.

I could wish to live over again many days like the day before yesterday. It was like another spring in the midst of my winter

and I revelled in it. Our boating on the Thames will be one of my pleasant recollections of the Unknown Isle. We took the train to Kingston and, when once there, Rodney introduced his famous new boat to me. It is painted pale green and it looks very smart, but it had no name. Its almost fragile appearance gave me the idea that it would start off by itself and somewhat alarmed me. As soon as I had set foot in it, though, I realised how perfectly balanced it was and I was reassured. I wish I could say I had confidence in *her* as the English do. They speak of a child as "it," but every sort of boat is of the feminine gender. It has been said that this is a kind of chivalrous courtesy. In attributing the feminine gender to things that men handle so cleverly, that they bend to their will and from which they exact obedience, do they not rather affirm by that their own masculine power? It seems to me that this is the case. Then, too, there is only one animal to which they usually give the feminine gender and that is the cat. It is an animal that scratches and that has the reputation of being treacherous. Thanks to this fact, I cannot believe in their politeness. At any rate they love their boats dearly and the "she" is a pretty fancy.

Edith took her place at the helm as usual, her brother seized the oars and we set off. An Englishman always looks best either in evening dress or in his flannels. Rodney was superb in his youthful strength and freedom of movement. His stroke was gentle, light, and powerful. It gave me that sensation of perfect rhythm which one only has in a gondola. The Thames, although less picturesque than the Seine, is very beautiful. The river is very wide in certain places and deep enough to be dangerous. In spite of the sunshine, I had the impression of a northern country all the time. The English scenery, with its green, grey, and yellow tones, all mingled together, has not that vividness of colouring which renders the French landscape so gay. The blue is always lacking in English scenery. We were obliged to land several times on account of the locks, and I noticed the expression of intense interest on the faces of those who were boating and the delight they seemed to feel in the difficult and somewhat complicated manœuvring of their respective boats.

Just before arriving at the place chosen for luncheon, I saw, to my surprise, about twenty tents in a large meadow. I asked what this was.

"Gentlemen camping out," explained Rodney. "People who feel the need of fresh air, simple food, and of living a hardy life for a time. This is what we arrive at, thanks to our ultra civilisation."

The tents were of grey linen, rather high and of elegant shape. Some of them were adorned with bouquets of wild flowers. These outdoor people were lunching in pleasant company, for there were light dresses and women's hats to be seen.

"The French flag!" I exclaimed, on seeing our colours over one of the tents."

"Hurrah for France!" said Rodney gaily.

Just at that moment a boat passed us. There were two young men in it and one of them smiled and raised his hat. He was probably the owner of the French flag; he had overheard our words. I was delighted with this exchange of politeness.

We lunched under the shadow of a huge willow-tree. Its hanging branches made a curtain for us. The meal was enlivened by Rodney's nonsense and Ruby's brilliant sallies. Love could be read in their eyes and occasionally it created touching little silences between them, but underneath all this there was a sense of a strong bond between them, a bond which linked their lives together and which had been gradually formed by their long friendship and by an infinite number of recollections and interests common to them both. As we rowed up the river, I had noticed Ruby sheltering the bare head of our oarsman with her parasol. On arriving, she insisted on his putting on his flannel neck-tie, and later on she quietly helped him to the dainty morsels. I compared all this involuntarily with the way an American woman would have acted. She would have tyrannised over the poor fellow all day, got out of him all that she could for her own personal satisfaction, and never once thought of his comfort or of his health. Ruby is old-fashioned, she belongs to the old world. The new fashion and the new world treat men somewhat cruelly.

After lingering a long time over luncheon, we rowed back again and, at about half-past three, arrived at the nearest landing-place to Cosy Farm. We had to walk for some distance along those green lanes which are among the beauties of the English country. We even had to climb some stiles. Ah, those stiles, how characteristic they are of the English! The owner of certain land puts up a gate or stile to maintain his right of road. Passers-by may, however, climb the stile and there are sometimes steps to facilitate the climb. These stiles are frequently the trysting-places for lovers, so that if all the kisses given there could light them up, there would be illuminations from one end of the Unknown Isle to the other.

On arriving at Cosy Farm we went along a narrow path, with fruit-trees on either side, until we reached the house. Two terriers, on seeing us, began to bark gleefully, a collie rose with great dignity, a grey angora cat, whom we disturbed, set up her back, a couple of pigeons flew away, and a woman in a sun bonnet, who was tending some climbing plants in the porch, turned round, and, on seeing us, immediately came towards us with a joyful exclamation. I was introduced and welcomed by our hostess. She then took off her hideous head-gear and I saw a face with small, irregular features, a small nose, a wide, laughing mouth, and quick, intelligent brown eyes. Her short dress of dark-grey cloth, her cambric blouse, and well-tied cravat, made her look almost young, although she must have been at least thirty-five. There was no mistaking the fact that she was a lady. Cosy Farm delighted me. There is no attempt to appear rustic and there are no clipped lawns and exotic plants. There are meadows, fruit-trees, and an immense kitchen garden. In the midst of all this a long, low building, with an old roof, in which are attic windows adorned with flowers, a porch covered with clematis and roses, ivied walls with windows interspersed, and a border of simple, bright-coloured flowers. The inside of the house is charming. On the ground floor, at the back of the house, is the kitchen, with a sitting-room for the servants and the pantry. In front is a wainscoted room with a ceiling supported with beams and a high chimney-piece. This

is Miss Norcroft's business room. The furniture is extremely simple. There are glass cases for the seeds and specimens of plants, and shelves full of books on botany and agriculture. To the right of the hall, there is a small dining-room and beyond that a delightful little sitting-room. On the first floor are four bedrooms, a bathroom, and a linen-room. The fragrant, vivifying air circulates freely through the whole house, coming in through the open windows. The furnishing of the entire establishment could not have cost much and yet it is all perfect. In the stable I saw a horse and a pony, and in the carriage house a cart, a dog-cart, and a bicycle. There are three maid servants, two gardeners, and a carter. There is no dairy at Cosy Farm. Its sole wealth consists of a poultry yard and a kitchen garden. The garden is very large and admirably well-kept. Miss Norcroft works in it herself at all seasons. She gets her stockings and sabots from Brittany. With great pride she showed me about half a dozen pairs of sabots, and she declares that there is no kind of shoe so practical and hygienic. She has had this farm for five years and has enlarged it several times. It now brings in enough to live on comfortably and to be very hospitable. Her spare rooms are nearly always occupied. She often invites a few poor overworked creatures there for a change. She gets invitations to London and goes to the theatres, cycles, plays golf, takes in newspapers and reviews, and keeps in touch with everything. People who are dressed by six o'clock in the summer and seven in the winter can get through a great deal.

We had tea out-doors under an old apple-tree and thoroughly enjoyed the strawberries and cream and the cucumber sandwiches. In the midst of our little feast, two girls, accompanied by a young man, arrived on their cycles and received a hearty welcome. The sight of the most luxurious Parisian hotel leaves me absolutely unmoved, but Cosy Farm made me envious. I said to myself that if some good fairy should offer me a similar home, I would come down most willingly from my branch and take up my abode there to the end.

As we were returning by boat, we had to leave early. Edith

and I lingered in the porch talking to our hostess, and Rodney started on with Ruby. We followed them slowly and, on turning into a narrow lane with high hedges, I stopped short, touched and delighted with what I saw. Far ahead of us, standing out clearly against the horizon, were the white outlines of the young couple. They were under a wide but low ash-tree, and the rays of the sun, concentrated by a light mist, made them a warm golden background. They were standing there face to face, she, with her hands behind her, listening, and he—well he was no doubt repeating to her the eternal words which Nature gives to man for his love conquests.

"Look there!" I exclaimed to Edith. "There is the human scene which must have furnished the poet of the book of Genesis with his symbolical legend of 'Eden.'"

"What an idea!" she answered. "I hope they are not under an apple-tree though."

"No, they are under a venerable English ash-tree, and they are clothed, but all the same they reproduce the primordial picture, touched up of course, refined since then and improved."

"Oh, Pierre de Coulevain," she said, "do not be so French, so profane."

Just at this moment, Rodney put his two hands on his companion's shoulders.

"I hope he is not going to kiss her," said Edith, with comic anxiety.

"There is a great deal of kissing out-doors in your novels," I remarked, "and in lordly parks just as much as at stiles."

"And not only in our novels, I am afraid," she said.

As she finished speaking, her brother put his arm gleefully through Ruby's and they both disappeared from sight round the bend of the road.

"He has surely proposed," remarked Edith, "and we can guess the answer."

On arriving at the boat we saw the expression of triumph on Rodney's face, while Ruby's beamed with happiness.

"Ruby can take the helm now," said Edith, with a forced smile, "I shall not be sorry to rest."

Rodney acquiesced with a promptness which must have given his sister a pang.

We were all rather silent on the return journey. This little human barque, skimming so rapidly along, was filled to overflowing with love, joy, hope, regret, all those invisible and intangible things which are the only ones that count. I was fully conscious of this for a minute and that sensation of the profoundness of life gave me, as it always does, a thrill of awe.

We were back at St. Olaf at about half-past six. The young people went straight to Mrs. Baring and I then heard their gay voices calling Edith. I supposed that the confession was made.

On entering the drawing-room, after dressing for dinner, I found my host standing with his back to the grate, which was all filled with plants. He looked at me in a half triumphant, half shy way, and said, smiling:

"Do you want to see an Englishman who has just done a foolish thing?"

"He would not be the first one I have seen," I replied.

Rodney bowed. "Perhaps you have never met one who was proud of it and very happy about it?"

"No, I have not," I said.

"Well then, look at me."

"Oh, you look like a man who has just won the prize in a lottery, or at least something very valuable," I remarked. "Perhaps it is a ruby?"

"That's just what it is," he answered with a happy laugh, colouring like a boy.

"I guessed on Friday, when I heard Miss Talbot's name for the first time."

"Good Heavens! I did not know that I gave myself away like that. I must beware."

"Love makes itself felt like heat and cold. Not even an Englishman can hold out against it. And you proposed on your way back from Cosy Farm, under an old tree."

Rodney opened his eyes wide. "Was there a tree there?" he asked.

"Ungrateful creature!" I exclaimed. "There was an old tree and you sought its shadow and protection instinctively. You have no idea how biblical you both looked."

"Don't make fun of us," said Rodney. "On leaving Wimbledon this morning, I wondered whether I should have the courage to propose. The river must have inspired me. It always brings me luck."

"And Edith had arranged a fine chance for you!" I put in.

"Oh, she is a brick!" he said, in a heart-felt tone.

"I am sincerely glad that I can congratulate you," I said. "It seems to me that you and Miss Talbot are made for each other. That is a very common speech, but I mean a great deal when I say it!"

"And then we are such old chums," added the young man, his voice somewhat muffled with his emotion. "It seems to me as though we have always been engaged."

"You surely were by Fate."

"I used, for years, to spend my holidays at her home in Sussex, at St. Clement's Court. I taught her to row and to manage a sailing-boat. What quarrels and makings-up and battles we have had! I often wonder how a man can marry a girl without knowing anything about her character and her tastes. And to think that marriages are still like that in France and in all Latin countries."

"A relic of barbarity, of Oriental manners and customs, about which there is always a certain risk. I fancy a diversity of character is a good thing in married life, but a diversity of tastes is fatal. Two human beings may be married by their parents, the clergyman, the priest or the registrar, but if their tastes do not blend, they will always remain apart and I do not know anything more painful than separation in marriage."

"No indeed! Fancy me handicapped by a wife who neither liked the country nor yet sports!" exclaimed the young man with comic horror.

"Well, you need not fear that with Miss Talbot," I said smiling, "and beside that, she is interested in things pertaining to a higher life."

"Yes, she is perfect," he said slowly, as though revelling in the picture of perfection he was conjuring up.

Ruby, Mrs. Baring, and Edith now came in and their arrival cut short our conversation. The dinner was as solemn and as ceremonious as usual, but there were glances exchanged, a joyful ring in the voices, a sort of contagious contentment, which had an influence on the atmosphere. After playing cards, Edith and I, under the pretext of being tired, withdrew at the same time as Mrs. Baring, leaving the library to the lovers. They probably sealed their engagement with that peculiar English kiss, which is so different from the French kiss, very very different from the Italian *baccio* and distinctly less dangerous.

When we were in my room, I invited Edith to sit down for a talk.

"Has Rodney told you?" she asked.

"Yes and I have congratulated him."

"You see how simply we do things in England," she said. "We fall in love, tell each other, and are engaged. Do you not think our manners and customs are more rational than yours? It seems to me that marriage ought to be born of love and not love of marriage."

"Not too fast though, for you must take into account the difference of temperament. An Englishman likes what he knows, and a Frenchman the unknown. The Frenchman has a powerful and insatiable faculty, it is that of imagination. He must have nourishment at all costs for that faculty, and only the unknown can supply him with that. With us, married happiness has more of the unforeseen, more idealism, more delicate shades than with you."

"Do you think so?"

"What I have been told by many of your countrywomen has edified me on the subject. If we are to judge by results, there are fewer unhappy unions in France than anywhere else."

"Oh!" exclaimed Edith, with an incredulous intonation.

A little knock at my door cut our discussion short.

"Can I come in and be congratulated?" asked Ruby, looking in.

"Yes, yes indeed!" I answered. Her face was still beaming with joy. I clasped both her hands in mine and congratulated her heartily.

"I am so happy," she said simply.

"Well, sit down and tell us about this great happiness." She sank down on the carpet and began at once.

"Rodney will take me to London to-morrow and then he will go to Arundel and see my parents. Pierre de Coulevain, do not be shocked, we do things like this in my beloved country. Girls in France are not allowed to fall in love like this, are they?"

"Not yet!" I answered.

"Oh, how I pity them!" said Ruby candidly. "The engagement time must be the best time in life. Suppose love should not come after marriage?"

"Well, there is resignation, and there are such things as duty and heroism too. There must be all that, you know." Ruby made a grimace which spoke volumes. All those virtues did not seem very inviting when compared with all that she was now experiencing.

"And then, too, fancy marrying a man chosen by other people, a stranger! Oh no, thank you. It makes my hair stand on end to think of it. I can scarcely believe that such things are possible. With us, arranged marriages nearly always turn out badly, do they not, Edith?"

"Yes, generally!"

"It seems to me," said Ruby, with a pretty seriousness, "that love which has deep roots, roots that go down to our early days, must be more likely to last. It seems to me that one might cease caring for a man with whom one had suddenly fallen in love, but it would be impossible to cease loving the friend of one's childhood, with whom one has a crowd of recollections in common."

"Agreed, but that comradeship which is the custom here, which your country life and your sports help on, is not without danger. Plenty of disappointments, catastrophes, and broken hearts are the result of it."

"Ah yes, that is inevitable," said Ruby, "but hearts that are broken before marriage can be mended, whilst afterwards—oh, horror—No, I have never so thoroughly appreciated the good fortune of being a free-born English girl."

Then suddenly breaking off she said with a mischievous laugh:

"What a shock Aunt Lucy and Mrs. Nerwind will have on seeing me come back engaged!"

"Tell me," I said, "did you not rather fancy that Rodney was going to ask the fatal question? Remember, I am a poor novelist trying to get information, so do not let me make any errors." A vivid colour came into Ruby's cheeks.

"Yes, I had a sort of presentiment," she admitted. "And yet when Edith came to fetch me to St. Olaf, my first idea was to refuse."

"Yes, the feminine instinct of resistance."

"The second idea, though, brought me here. It must have been decreed for to-day, the fatal question, as you call it," said Ruby getting up.

"Well I hope that to-day will be the first of a long, long chain of happy days."

Just as I spoke my eyes were attracted by a bright spark under the trees around the moon-lit lawn.

"Rodney is smoking his cigar of happiness out in front of his den," I said.

"Dear boy!"

My pen could not describe all that the girl put into those words.

"God prepared a nice 'week-end' for you," I said. "You will never forget it, shall you?"

"Never!" said Ruby, putting her arm round me impulsively and kissing me.

"You belong to the family now," she said, "does she not, Edith?"

"Of course she does," said my friend, shaking hands with me.

When once I was alone again, I had a distinct physical sen-

sation that the engaged girl took away with her some of the light, leaving my bedroom darker when she had gone.

. . . . . .

As arranged between the two young people, Rodney took Miss Talbot back to her aunt and then started for Arundel. He sent a telegram from there to announce that all had gone well. He came back by the last train and Edith and I sat up for him. He was radiantly happy, but very hungry. He did justice to the supper prepared for him. There was an enormous joint of roast beef, a ham, some lettuce, bread, and a bottle of ale. The table was well lighted and Rodney, with his fine, well-built figure and his healthy look, was a splendid example of human vitality. Whilst eating, he told us about his journey and his visit to St. Clement's Court. He took his food in an absolutely mechanical way, for, under the empire of the sentiment that now had sway over him, his soul alone appeared to be conscious. It shone in his eyes, smiled from his lips, and put into his whole face a joy that softened his expression, that made him look younger, and I was delighted, as I always am, to be able to observe this duality of the individual, which only occurs at moments of over-excitement.

"They are all of them pleased," he added, when he had finished telling us the details. "Sir Charles is not sorry that it is to be only an engagement for the present. He wants to keep his secretary as long as possible. I quite understand that, and I am resigning myself to be patient for a year. If, at the end of that time, no one does anything for me, I shall buy a license, which will cost three pounds, and I shall marry Ruby. We shall only want two witnesses, we shall sign our names on some parish register, and there we shall be joined together for better and for worse. That easy way of marrying would be rather dangerous in France, would it not?" he said smiling.

"We should have to make allowance for ardour," I replied. "If our law permitted parents to will their money as they liked, as in England, and if bigamy were well punished, such freedom could not do much harm, and it would

have some very good results. In England there is a great deal of risk about it."

"Yes, I agree there is," said Rodney.

"And all the more," I continued, "as a young Englishman between eighteen and twenty or twenty-three, generally has the marriage fever. After a few glasses of champagne he is capable of proposing to a perfect monkey. I consider champagne to be one of Nature's important matrimonial agents in England."

Rodney and his sister laughed, and then Edith, suddenly looking very grave, said:

"An agent responsible for many wretched marriages. Many young men, when mere children, have, under its influence, given the name of their ancestors, names that belonged to history and to our country, to the most unworthy creatures. Our nobility owes many of the black sheep that have entered its ranks to champagne."

"Yes," added Rodney, "the freedom we enjoy is very bad for weak-minded creatures, for certain young idiots, but it is the principle that must be studied and not the individual."

"Right," I said, "you are perfectly right. In England you consider the welfare of the masses before that of the individual, and in France it is just the contrary. Do you know that up to the age of sixty we are obliged to have our parents' consent to our marriage or else to produce their death certificate?"

Rodney was just lifting his glass to his lips. In his amazement he put it down on the table. "You do not mean that?"

"Indeed I do. You see we have a code. You have no idea of all the formalities, the papers, and the difficulties there are with us, and then the civil marriage and the religious marriage! A Swiss waiter in an hotel, who wanted to marry a French girl, said to me one day: 'A man needs to be very straight, for he is generally tempted to do without the law and the parson.' The poor man's upright conduct obliged him to wait three months for his wife and to pay eight pounds for formalities. I cannot help thinking that Nature has given us very complex machinery merely for the sake of limiting our number and checking our progress."

"Your way of considering the rôle of humanity makes you find extraordinary reasons."

"Do you think they are bad ones?"

"No, for they seem to explain things."

"Well, then, my way of looking at them cannot be quite wrong."

"What always surprises me," observed Edith, "is the pomp and ceremony with which the lower classes and the lower middle class marry in France. The wedding parties on Saturday afternoons in the Bois in Paris are both amusing and touching. The man is generally grotesque in his badly cut coat. The girl is often very nice and seems more refined."

"Quite right, she is more refined."

"And they look so triumphant, so beaming, in spite of the fact that the day's expenses must considerably diminish their little hoard."

"Yes, but it puts a little light into their life. It is like a bright spot. If they are happy afterwards, it will always be a delightful memory for them. Two days later they put on their harness once more and perhaps never take it off again in this life. The white dress will be dyed, but the symbolical orange blossoms will always be kept. The bouquet used to be put under a glass case. As I have always told you, we are imaginative people. We are born with a longing for a certain little blue flower, the ideal, and we must have it, cost what it may. The most humble of us will find a way of getting a spray."

"In England, people of the lower class and even middle class people marry without going to any expense. They wear their Sunday clothes and frequently do not tell anyone until after they are married."

"Oh yes, your marriages are generally quieter than ours and I rather like this. I envy your novelists. With your manners and customs, there are a whole crowd of situations and effects for them to work upon. With us, there is nothing of this. We are obliged to fall back on psychology, and then, by way of relief, we have scarcely anything but adultery."

Rodney burst out laughing. "That is quite true," he said.

"And these simple marriages, with only God and the priest there, are full of poetry, somewhat severe perhaps, but very masculine. The bride in her travelling-costume seems ready to go with her husband to the end of the world. It is a fine piece of symbolism. I once saw a wedding of this kind in London, at St. Mary's Church, and it moved me to tears."

"I think fashionable weddings are revolting," remarked Rodney.

"All the more so," I added, "as in such exhibitions the man always looks ridiculous."

"There, Edith, you hear that, a pleasant perspective for me. If I had my choice we should be married at Arundel, with only the family present. Ruby should wear a *chic* yachting-costume of dark blue serge, with a white waistcoat and gold buttons and, as soon as we came out of church, I should take her straight away in a yacht to Norway."

"You must certainly have some lacustrine blood in your veins," I said.

"Or Danish blood, Scandinavian at any rate," he answered. "I fancy, though, that I shall have to go through the whole ordeal. I expect they will not spare me the drums and trumpets, the bridesmaids, the rice, and even the old shoes for luck. Oh, I am quite resigned to all kinds of sacrifices. Ruby will make up for everything."

"I am sure she will," I answered with conviction. I then rose and unwisely held out my hand to the young man. Quite unconsciously he grasped it so energetically that I made a grimace. An Englishman's sentiments fly to his muscles just as a Frenchman's fly to the head, so that, at times of great joy or grief, an Englishman's clasp of the hand is somewhat painful.

I am delighted to have had this pretty idyll to write about. It is restful after the more severe pictures I have had to draw. Then, too, it has shown me more distinctly the difference between English and French conjugal love. The former seems to me like a beautiful river, very wide and deep, flowing gently, but surely, between flat banks, to the sea. The second is like

a tumultuous stream, with constant swells, flowing between steep banks, springing over obstacles and forming billows of foam in its efforts to reach the light, frequently going astray, getting lost sometimes in precipices, but always coming out right farther along, calmed down, perhaps, but triumphant and, in spite of everything, finally reaching the ocean—the infinite.

St. Olaf.

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I was surprised and delighted. "*Bon jour*, Rose," I replied, smiling. Edith had explained to her that the extraordinary beings who live on the other side of the English Channel are accustomed to be wished good morning or good evening by their domestics. She had then taught her to say these words in French, apparently to give me pleasure, but in reality, I fancy, so that the breach of etiquette on the servant's part should not be so grave and so dangerous.

In this country, there is nothing more characteristic than the intercourse between masters and servants. In France, in Italy, and even in aristocratic Austria, servants are part of the family. In England, they are only part of the household. In spite of this, they are better lodged, better fed, and better treated than anywhere else. They have clean, wholesome rooms and nothing is neglected for their comfort and pleasure. Their sitting-room is always nicely and frequently prettily furnished, adorned with pictures, with the portraits of the King and Queen, and sometimes decorated with flowers. The number of their meals and *menus* would make a French mistress open her eyes in astonishment.

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noon they wear a black stuff dress, a trimmed apron, and a more elegant cap. They do not go in for dark dresses which do not show the dirt. This, in France, is still our way of understanding cleanliness. The ladies' maids need not wear the cap.

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English people usually speak to their servants very politely and respect their hours for meals most scrupulously. They also allow them to go out a great deal and give them two or three weeks' holiday a year. They are most thoughtful and humane in considering their health and strength, but there is no apparent gratitude for all this. The reason is that the snobbishness of what is considered decorum has made automata of the servants. They do not speak, they do not even say "good morning" unless they are addressed first. They are expected to look impassive. Service of this kind, with no smiles and no glances interchanged, cannot possibly create any bond between master and servant. The latter earns for himself an independence, that he would not willingly give up again.

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As there is no solidarity about such service, the domestics merely consider their own pleasure or interest, give notice on the slightest pretext, and are gradually getting more and more exacting. People who do not care to spend their lives in looking out for cooks and housemaids are therefore obliged to shut their eyes to a great deal. The most comic part about all this is that the servants themselves have become snobbish in their turn, and they prefer what they consider the "right thing." They would not have much respect for a mistress who treated them with a certain familiarity, or who took an interest in their private affairs. They would be sure to say that "she had not been used to servants." They might even give notice on the slightest provocation, not feeling sure that she was a lady.

Of course there are exceptions to all this. There are houses in which, in spite of good discipline, the servants are fond of their master and mistress and devoted to the whole family. In such homes old servants are cared for, and those who employ them like to talk to them and to recall old memories.

Among the general servants, who come more into contact with the family, there are some excellent creatures, and heaven knows that their life is not a very enviable one.

I like the English servants very much. They are less dainty, but more refined than ours, less intelligent, and they have less intuition, but they are better educated. They do not wait on us as well, but they are more correct in their manners. In spite of what is generally said, they are very capable of becoming attached to their master or mistress. Occasionally, too, one meets with most extraordinary mentalities among English servants, a mentality such as I have never met with among ours. In consequence of this, very typical and droll incidents occur in English houses.

About two years ago, I was visiting a friend of mine in London. On a certain Sunday afternoon she saw her butler, whom she considered a treasure, emerge from the kitchen in the basement, arranged in the uniform of the Salvation Army.

"Perkins!" she exclaimed, "what is the meaning of this?" "Where are you going? It is tea-time."

"I must ask you to excuse me, madam; I have had a call that I must obey."

The Salvation Army music could be heard in the distance and this fully explained his words.

"You ought to have told me this when I engaged you," remarked my friend, annoyed. "Your religion is decidedly a very inconvenient one."

"I am sorry, madam, but the will of the Lord must be obeyed."

The sound of the tambourines could now be heard more distinctly and Perkins, drawn irresistibly by the spirit of this strange sect, rushed out of the house.

My friend was obliged to give him notice finally, as it was somewhat appalling to have a butler who might be "called" in this way, at any moment. It might happen that the call would come at the hour of luncheon or of a dinner-party.

Another lady, who lives near Brighton, told me that on her way home from church, one Sunday evening, she saw one of those crowds which, on Sundays, in England, so often assemble to hear an out-door sermon. This lady approached and, to her horror, discovered that the preacher was one of her maids. She listened for a time, keeping out of sight, and she was amazed at the elevated ideas and at the clear way in which the girl expressed them. This was the automaton who waited on her every day. She gave the girl notice, because, as she confessed to me, she was embarrassed whenever she thought of the words she had heard.

I heard another little story quite recently which seemed to me extremely comic. I laugh still whenever I think of it. I went with Edith to call on one of her friends who is very fond of the French, and who had always been very pleasant to me. When she came to us in the drawing-room, she looked both amused and annoyed, and it was very evident that she had just been very angry.

"I can tell you something that will amuse you," she said to me, as she shook hands. "I must first explain that we dine on Sundays at half-past one, instead of in the evening, simply to give more freedom to our servants on that day. My cook has

just informed me that she would prefer not to have a large joint to roast that day. She goes out with her young man and does not care to get her cheeks so red with the fire. What do you think of that?"

"It is delicious," I replied, laughing heartily. "What did you say?"

"I told her, of course, that she might look out for another place. These horrible creatures are the plague of my life," continued our hostess, angrily. "Would such a thing have happened in France?" she asked.

"Oh no, certainly not," I answered, "but all the same everyone is beginning to complain of the trouble with servants. Luxury, vanity, and love of pleasure are on the increase everywhere. There is less religion among the lower classes and, as their conscience is unformed, there is a great lack of balance. We are going through an epoch of transition and nothing is in its place at present. With us, only good mistresses manage to find good servants, but they still find them."

"I wish we could say the same here," remarked Edith.

"One of my friends tells me that, in Paris, the valets and maidservants all have their bedrooms on the sixth floor of the houses," said the hostess. "She says that all the servants pervert each other up there. Is that true?"

"Quite true, and that the sixth floor exercises an irresistible fascination over numbers of young girls who come to Paris from the country and from provincial towns. They go up there and it is the ruin of them. Those who employ them live with a veritable hive of corruption over their heads, and they themselves are the first victims."

"Why do they allow it?"

"Because they cannot help it. Our architects have not yet thought of creating a kind of dwelling in which moral and physical hygiene can be observed. In drawing their plans, they never give a thought to the health and happiness of the beings who are to live between the lines that they draw. Architects ought to be hygienists, physiologists, and psychologists."

"And gentlemen, before everything else," added Edith.

"Yes, gentlemen by education, if not by birth. They might then contribute largely to the improvement of our race. We want more space."

"We could never come into such close contact with our servants as you do," said our hostess. "We dislike flats on that very account."

"I can quite understand, but you see with us it is different. We like our servants and this shows up how unlike we are. It pleases us to hear them wish us good morning and good night. The way they look at us, their smiles, their frank expression, all this seems to warm the atmosphere in our homes. You cannot imagine how much kindliness on one side and affection on the other side is due to all this. Your servants are disciplined, ours are told what to do and they would never put up with all the English etiquette. It would kill all sentiment and they need sentiment, just as we do. It is both a force and a curb."

"I see," said our hostess, looking as though she began to understand.

"I will give you an example," I continued; "a young mother I know was extremely zealous in carrying out the principles of hygiene. She told her nurse never to kiss the child in her care, giving her the reasons for the prohibition. At the end of a fortnight the nurse, with tears in her eyes, gave notice.

"'If I am never to kiss the baby, I shall never get fond of it. I would rather leave, as I should not nurse it well.'"

"Do you not think that it is your education which make these demonstrations necessary to you?" asked our hostess.

"Either our education or our soul, I cannot say which," I replied. "The kiss is, after all, one of the mysterious means of which Nature makes use for awakening and keeping up affection and love. It cannot be that the result of it is merely an exchange of microbes."

"Let us hope not," said Edith, laughing.

"When I am on the Continent," remarked Mrs. S., "I like to talk to the maid who waits on me, but I assure you that it would be impossible in England, would it not Edith?"

"Quite," replied my friend, "and I can tell you that I am

the first to regret it. When once mother and I are at Loftshall we can be less reserved with the servants, as they will know there who we are. At Wimbledon, the slightest modification of the accepted customs would take away all prestige, and it is very difficult to keep up one's prestige in a suburban town with a modest income. I do not know whether you will understand this, but the lower classes in England only respect people who are well born. Servants like those who employ them to be ladies and gentlemen. I fancy they go up in their own estimation when this is the case. We are not Republicans here, you know," she added mischievously.

"No, you are more royalists than your king."

"I am afraid we are."

When we were leaving, Mrs. S. excused herself for "having talked servants."

"But," I exclaimed, "I have thoroughly enjoyed it," and I was seized with uncontrollable laughter at the thought of the cook who did not want to have red cheeks when she was going out with her lover.

Yesterday, when I was out on the Common, I saw one of the St. Olaf maidservants.

She was cycling and was wearing a linen skirt and a hat trimmed with coloured flowers. She looked quite young and her face was gay and animated. A couple of hours later, I saw her again in the dining-room, wearing her cap and apron and standing behind Mrs. Baring. The expression of her face was hard, and even hostile, and she looked ten years older. I had a sensation of the almost physical barrier which exists between master and servant here. It is one of those moral barriers which are very quickly raised, but which can only be destroyed gradually, by commencing at the foundation.

St. Olaf.

Miss Talbot arrived at St. Olaf this afternoon, without any warning. She came to tell us that she was going home. Sir Charles Talbot wants her at once. He is bringing out a book rather earlier than he had intended and he counts on his daughter

for correcting the proofs. He has therefore sent for her quite unceremoniously. She takes this very good-temperedly and I like her better this time even than on her first visit. She is modern, without being too modern. At times, when she expresses some rather daring opinion, or uses an expression bordering on slang, I see, to my secret amusement, old England, in the person of Mrs. Baring, shiver. Thanks to Miss Talbot's country life and to this childhood's friendship developing into love, she has kept a delightful and very rare moral freshness. Just as she was leaving an idea occurred to her, and she asked for a pencil and paper. With huge letters and a red pencil she wrote the following words:

"Pater has the gout in his No. 1 right hand. He wants his No. 2 right hand. I start to-morrow, early train. For further explanations apply to Edith. No grumbling. Good daughters make good wives. You will be expected at St. Clement's for week-end."

RUBY.

P. P. C.

She then pinned the paper up in the library, over the chimney-piece to the right, and made us promise to leave Rodney to discover it himself.

As he had no idea of the disappointment in store for him, he was very gay all the evening. After bridge we went into the library as usual. He at once caught sight of the white paper.

"What is that?" he exclaimed at once. On reading it, his surprise and indignation brought a flush to his face.

"Sir Charles has sent for Ruby?" he said, turning to his sister. Edith replied that he had.

"Well, there is no one in the world so tyrannical and selfish as an English father!" he exclaimed angrily.

"No, unless it is an English husband," remarked Edith, promptly. "After all, we are the ones to be pitied, as we shall have neither of you for the week-end."

"Yes, you are right," he said, smiling at his sister. He then took Ruby's paper down, folded it carefully, and put it into his pocket-book.

I was sorry that Miss Talbot was leaving London, as I had hoped to find her there the following week. For the last few days, "departure" seems to be in the air at St. Olaf. On the 15th of July the house will be empty. My hostesses are leaving for the sea.

Rodney is going yachting with a friend, and the servants will take their holidays one after the other. The Barings and the Talbots have taken a house in Scotland for August and September in honour of the younger son, who is returning after three months' absence.

"We shall not go to the South of France in the winter this year," said Edith, when telling me of all these arrangements. "You see, when we spend too much for one thing, we have to economise in another way. Mother is very good at that kind of balancing of accounts, but it always exasperates me."

The end of my visit was drawing near and Edith did not like to hear me speak of it.

"St. Olaf will seem horrible to me when you have gone," she said. "I should like to start at once for the sea, as that always consoles me a little. You have no idea what the sea is to us islanders. I can never bear to be long without seeing it, as it always relieves me when I have worries. I always come away from it feeling better, physically and morally."

St. Olaf.

At this season of the year in England, there are garden parties everywhere. It is the special distraction of the season, a distraction of British invention. These out-door receptions allow hostesses to invite a great many people at the same time. Some of these people are not invited to more intimate receptions, so that it is a way of getting rid of certain social obligations. Another thing about this form of hospitality is that it looks much more than it really costs. For garden-parties to be a success, there ought to be a park and plenty of trees, green velvety lawns, footmen in handsome livery, and all kinds of luxurious accessories, plenty of beautiful well-dressed women and distinguished-looking men. The middle-class and pro-

vincial garden parties are somewhat painful to see. The daylight brings out the imperfections of the light-coloured dresses in the most cruel way, the crudeness of the artificial flowers, the awkwardness of the hired servants, and all the mediocrity of the people and things alike. The rites and ceremonies are the same, though, the shaking hands with the hosts, the chattering in groups, the flirtation when possible, the tea with all kinds of dainties, but always accompanied by strawberries and cream, and often champagne. I used to think that garden parties had been created thanks to the lawns, but I fancy it was thanks to the strawberries and cream and champagne.

At Wimbledon there always seems to be one of these parties going on. We see files of carriages, nearly every day, in front of some house and the music of more or less Hungarian orchestras can be heard. Out in the green lanes, we meet ladies and young girls, arrayed in light dresses and flower-trimmed hats. It appears that such little festivities are very easily arranged.

It is only necessary to write to Whiteley's, the celebrated London shop which furnishes everything from a white mouse to an elephant and from a skein of thread to a husband or a wife.

The hostess must state the number of guests and the amount she wishes to spend. Whiteley procures musicians, singers, reciters, entertainers of all kinds. He also undertakes the refreshments and sends waiters. One of his managers comes to see the garden and decides, with the hostess, where the various accessories shall be placed. On the day fixed, the vans arrive from London, and in a few hours, everything is arranged, so that the mistress of the house has only to receive her guests. After the feast, everything is taken away again with the same alacrity. The sun is always invited and even reckoned upon. If it should be impolite enough to send the rain in its place, the guests take refuge in the house and enjoy themselves just as much in the crowded rooms.

In France, only very rich people can give garden parties. Wealthy middle-class people could supply the strawberries and cream and champagne, but they have not the lawns. The stony paths of their ill-kept gardens would not lend themselves well

I am all alone at St. Olaf and my hosts are on the way to Loftshall. On Thursday, the news of her cousin's death arrived, so that Mrs. Baring has now come into possession of the family property. It is strange that I should just happen to be here at the time. The coincidence caused me such pleasure, both as a friend and as a novelist, that I felt inclined to say "bravo" to Providence. It would perhaps be more respectful merely to express my thanks. The coincidences of life used to give me the idea of a stroke of luck, or of good fortune. Most people consider them in this way. At present, I always see in these coincidences the conscious will of the gods, by whom we are governed, and they appear to me infinitely more curious and interesting. This last one has been a valuable lesson to me, as it has enabled me to get a more exact idea of the working of Nature. I had imagined that a stroke of good fortune must produce an explosion of joy in any human creature, and I had always wished to be present and witness it. I remember once going to a baker's in the Rue St. Honoré, and buying some currants, merely to see the face of one of the employés who had just won a lottery prize of two hundred and fifty thousand francs. I expected to find him transfigured, but my foolish hopes were disappointed. His face did not beam at all. I have just been more disappointed. My St. Olaf friends do not appear to realise that they have become wealthy, after their struggle to make ends meet. It must be that the full consciousness of a happy or unhappy change only reaches the soul gradually, probably so that its effects shall be softened. I am fully persuaded, too, that we always exaggerate everyone's happiness or unhappiness and our own as well.

Yesterday morning, Edith and I intended to go to London by the same train as Rodney. We therefore went down to breakfast with our hats on. The postman arrived very late, almost at the end of breakfast, and he only brought some newspapers and an oblong, sealed letter for Mrs. Baring. She turned it over and examined it, as though she did not know the hand-

writing on the envelope. We are always interested unconsciously in a missive received in our presence. I watched my hostess and saw her face turn paler. I noticed, too, that her fingers trembled. She glanced from one to the other of her children with an indescribable expression.

"What is it, mother?" asked Edith, who had met her eyes.

"Thomas is dangerously ill."

The colour which came into Rodney's face betrayed his emotion.

"Oh," he exclaimed, "is it paralysis?"

"Congestion of the brain, the rector says."

"How old is he?" asked Rodney.

"Seventy-six," replied his mother.

"Bad for him, I am afraid, at that age," remarked Rodney.

When breakfast was over we all went into the library. Mrs. Baring was evidently deeply affected by the news. She sat down on the nearest chair.

"It will be better, perhaps, to put off our journey to London," I suggested.

"Yes," replied Edith, "we must wait for the next news."

Rodney was preparing to start by himself, when I heard the wheels of a bicycle.

"Perhaps this is a telegram," I said. It was a telegram, and as Mrs. Baring read it we knew, by her face, what news it contained. She handed it to her son without a word, and her trembling fingers grasped the arms of her chair.

Rodney read the telegram aloud.

"The Squire passed away quietly this morning at 5.20 without recovering consciousness. Lyndall."

One of those silences suggestive of the Invisible followed. Each member of the little family felt something of that awe which Death inspires.

"I am sorry for him, but glad for you, mother," said Rodney, in a somewhat changed voice as he slowly folded the telegram.

"Do not say that, my boy. Death is such a terrible and sacred thing that, in face of it, everything else is forgotten."

I felt very much embarrassed. I could neither condole with

Mrs. Baring nor yet congratulate her. I simply pressed one of her cold, white hands, which was resting on the arm of her chair, and then passed out by the open French window into the garden.

Half an hour later, Edith joined me there.

"I must go at once to London to order our mourning," she said. "Do you mind coming with me?"

"No indeed," I replied.

"We shall start for Loftshall to-morrow, by the 2.40 train. Mother wants you to stay on here until the day you had arranged to go on to Claridge's Hotel."

I refused this invitation at first, but Edith would not hear of another arrangement.

Just at that moment, a couple of rooks came down on to the lawn. They then flew up again, uttered their shrill cry, and, after describing a few circles, perched on a neighbouring tree.

"The rooks know," said Edith, watching them, and then in a lower voice, she added: "They have been here three consecutive years to inspect St. Olaf. I made up my mind that we should have Loftshall when they settled here. This spring they made their nest here, and you know we say that they bring luck."

"I hope they will not be the only ones to bring you luck," I said, putting my arm through hers.

We started at once for London and, on the way, I watched Rodney and his sister, hoping to see an extraordinary change in the expression of their faces. I was doomed to disappointment, for, like the baker's man after winning the lottery prize, their faces did not beam at all. Rodney tried to read his newspaper, but he soon gave that up, put it down on the seat, and was quickly lost in thought. His thoughts were by no means disagreeable ones, evidently. In similar circumstances, I feel sure that the best-disciplined Englishman in the world would not have been able to keep his mind fixed on politics.

At Charing Cross Edith and I left Rodney. He went on to the city to see his uncle and the family lawyer.

Edith's shopping-list was a very long one. We lunched at Claridge's and had an abominable cup of tea, somewhere, during the afternoon. It was nearly six when we returned to

Wimbledon. As the carriage was on its way up the steep hill, I looked at Edith, and, with a novelist's irresistible curiosity, I asked her whether she had begun to realise the change which had just taken place in her life.

"Oh yes," she replied, half smiling, "did you not notice how easily I spent the money to-day? You are in a hurry to see me happy," she continued. "Everything will come right in time, but at present I am discovering that blood is thicker than water. Our cousin was a bad sort of relative during his lifetime, but, all the same, I cannot help feeling his death and I cannot rejoice."

It was impossible to doubt the sincerity of her words, on seeing the expression of her beautiful blue eyes.

"Do you remember Loftshall?" I asked.

"Oh yes, very well," she replied. "When the elder brother, George, was alive, we used to go there on long visits. I was fourteen the last time we were there. Dear Cousin George, it was he who first put me on horseback. We were very good friends. You see," she added, lowering her voice, "Thomas was in love with my mother who was very beautiful as a girl. She preferred my father and Thomas never forgave either of them."

"I fancy that an Englishman feels that kind of defeat more deeply than any other man," I remarked.

To my surprise a wave of colour came into Edith's face.

"Oh yes, there is no doubt about that. A defeat of any kind is intolerable, though, to an Englishman."

"It is very fortunate that Loftshall was only left to him in trust," I said.

"Oh yes; all the same, though, I cannot believe that our cousin's spite would have gone as far as to disinherit us in favour of a distant branch of the family which has settled in America. Mother alone, now, will have the right of changing the line of heirs. She will never do it, though; Loftshall will go to the main line, to Rodney who will add the name of Wilkes to his own name. By some special arrangement, a certain amount of the money is not tied up. This should come back to Jack and

me. If we are not disinherited there is every chance that I shall be a rich old maid. We shall know all this, the day after to-morrow."

At dinner that evening, I guessed that the servants had been told the news. There was a kind of suppressed excitement in the atmosphere. The housemaid who waited at table had lost something of her automatic stiffness. She watched the family in a furtive way and seemed to be keeping her ears open. Rodney had wired to the Talbots, written to Ruby, seen his uncle, and conferred with the family lawyer. All this had made him all the more conscious of his new position. Although he controlled his feelings admirably, the sound of his voice and his gestures betrayed, at times, his inward exultation. He evidently felt that he was a step nearer to fortune.

After dinner, we strolled about for a long time in the garden. It had never seemed so fragrant before. The lime-trees, the acacias, and the roses had never before been so generous with their perfumes. The idea that those trees, flowers, and birds were all about to pass into other people's hands caused me a grief that was not only childish, but ridiculous. When we went in-doors, we took our "night cap" in the library. With all the visions of grandeur and of lordly mansions which had been haunting my brain since that morning, the simplicity and poverty of this room now struck me. It was just as cosy and just as charming as ever, but I felt obliged to own to myself that it was not a setting worthy of the aristocratic figures of these friends of mine.

"Fate is rather curious after all," I said, sitting down somewhat wearily in the arm-chair. "Only this morning you were going to London to buy a green hat."

"Blue," put in my friend.

"Blue then," I repeated in a docile way, "and it was a black hat that you were to buy."

"Yes. Then all my plans for the summer, the seaside and Scotland. What trouble I had taken to arrange all that."

"Yes, there is human liberty for you. What do you think of it all?" I asked, turning to Rodney.

He had been walking up and down the room. He now stood still with his back to the chimney-piece and said, with a mocking smile:

"You must have been inwardly jubilant to-day. I saw that you were, out of the corner of my eye. Your theories came to my mind several times, and all this unforeseen must seem to justify those theories in a certain measure. The fact that our movements are combined with the movements of other individuals, and yet that we should know nothing of these movements, shows that our liberty is, to a certain degree, restricted. I do not believe, though, like you, that we have no liberty and that we are merely factors."

"But partial liberty would be cruel, odious, impossible," I persisted. "We should be like so many cockchafers tied by one leg to a piece of thread. In spite of wings we could only go as far as the thread allowed us to go."

"But that is just how things are, I fancy."

"Not at all; we are simply guided."

"By blind gods then. How else could you explain all our counter-marches, all the obstacles, all our useless endeavours? What about the will that suggested to Edith her plans for the summer and the idea to buy a green hat?"

"Blue," corrected Edith, once more.

"Blue then. Do you mean to say that the will which inspired all this knew nothing of the near future?"

"Yes, it knew about it, but we are not intended to work for ourselves alone in this world. As your sister intended to go to the sea, she made several purchases and among other things she ordered two flannel costumes. She therefore put work into the hands of someone. By taking a house in Scotland, she has set several people to work. There has been an exchange of letters and there have been all kinds of other things in connection with it."

"But the blue hat, what about the blue hat?" persisted Rodney, his eyes shining with mischief.

"Well, she thought about it, pictured it to herself, it occupied

her thoughts. There must always be some corn in the mill. Nature knows that very well."

Rodney laughed outright. "Not a bad idea, that," he said.

"Joking apart," I continued, "for a long time the objection that you raised embarrassed me too. In my theories I found no way of explaining why we should have hopes that are doomed to disappointment, plans that come to nothing, dreams that cannot be realised, and why our paths should be full of failures and impediments; at present I understand that all these things are never, never useless, either to ourselves or to others. They all serve life. Our successes are the successes of the gods and our defeats are theirs too. Humanity will be consoled by this idea later on, when it is more enlightened."

"It is horribly tantalising though, not to understand the work in which we are taking part."

"If we could comprehend it with our earthly faculties it would not be a very great work. It is a fine thing to feel that we are allowed to take part in a work that is divine and eternal. There now, you tried to corner me. Have I come out creditably?"

"Yes," replied Rodney, thoughtfully, "but if we are to look at things in this way, everything seems so immense."

"Everything is immense, even our smallness," I answered with conviction; "but now, leaving the abstract for the concrete, my reason for being jubilant to-day was not so much because the event of this morning shows that I am right, but because your mother will have Loftshall at last."

"Dear Mater," said the young man, with a softer inflexion in his voice, "she will not need to turn her shillings over twenty times now before spending them."

"And I fancy Loftshall will help you to put your foot in the stirrup," I said; "it will mean Ruby, will it not?"

"Yes, it certainly will," he said, his face flushing at the thought.

"And it will mean Dick for me," said Edith, with a little laugh that was both bitter and ironical. "Dear old Dick, he will have a stall worthy of him at any rate."

"Jack little thinks what is awaiting him," said Rodney. "I wired to him at Montreal, but he is on his way home. He is travelling in America. It is very curious," he continued, "I have only a vague remembrance of Loftshall. I remember the bowling-green, though, very distinctly. Cousin George taught me to consider that with the greatest respect. It was very well kept, for he looked after it religiously, it might have been holy ground."

"I am sure you will like the old place," said Edith to me. "It is a real Elizabethan house, in the shape of the letter E. You must come and see it before leaving England. Now just own that you are dying to see it."

"I own that I am."

"That's right. I shall have to come back to Wimbledon a great deal before everything is settled," said Edith. "I will stay with you though at Claridge's. Nothing could help me more to realise the difference in the weight of my purse. When you have had enough of London, I will take you to Loftshall."

"I should think you will regret this delightful St. Olaf," I said.

"It is very evident that you did not spend your early days here," remarked Edith, smiling.

Rodney had been carefully preparing our "night caps" of soda-water with just a taste of whiskey. We took our sparkling glasses and raised them high for a few seconds, as a toast to our friendship and mutual good fortune. I retired very soon, leaving the brother and sister to talk over their private affairs. As Rodney held the door open for me I turned round, and the delightful *tableau vivant* stamped itself forcibly on my heart and brain.

The following day, I went with my hosts to the station and saw them off in the train. Just as they were starting Edith said to me: "Invite the dogs and the cats to tea with you."

When I found myself alone on the Wimbledon platform, I felt rather bewildered, until the strangeness of the situation made me smile. I was finishing my visit in a way that, at any rate, was not ordinary.

The carriage had been kept for me and Mrs. Baring had insisted that I should go for a long drive. I did so, but I neither saw trees, flowers, nor landscape. All my novelist's faculties were strained in imagining the end of this chapter of real life. I tried to picture Mrs. Baring arriving at the house in which she had not set foot for twenty years, and where she would find the man who had loved her lying dead. I should like to have seen the expression on the faces of my friends, their reception by the servants; I should have liked to be present at the funeral and to hear the will read.

On returning to the house, I asked for tea out on the lawn in my favourite spot, under a fragrant tree. I did not fail to invite the animals. Lord, the cat, is a thorough Britisher. It always takes tea with the family. Its milk is served in a bowl that was bought for that purpose at Aix-les-Bains. The dogs are only invited on Sundays, so that this exception must have been a joyful surprise for them. I served them very generously and, as usual, they had soon taken the contents of their bowls and were envious of the cat, who, with its smaller tongue, had not been able to get through the meal so quickly. They would have liked to push Lord away, but they knew that they ought not to do that. I watched the expression of their faces and saw the struggle that was going on. It was as though the cat knew the torture it was causing them and enjoyed prolonging it. It stopped lapping, half closed its eyes, but, as soon as the dogs moved forward, commenced again. When the cat had finished drinking, it got up and stretched itself. Jack and Bob at once rushed to the bowl and finished every spot left in it. Bob then went up to the cat and licked its mouth, but a scratch soon put an end to his interested effusions. This little scene had probably taken place often before in my presence, but I had never before noticed the various traits of human sentiments to be distinguished in it, and it seemed to me, more than ever, that there is no solution with regard to continuity in the chain of beings.

I lingered over my tea. Various couples of blackbirds took their afternoon meals as usual on the lawn, without any sign

of fear. They were also followed as usual by sparrows. I wondered how it was that the latter always followed them. Was it a kind of snobbishness that induced them to escort a big bird? I looked round fondly on all these creatures near me and at the beautiful trees and the gay flower-beds. The pretty Queen Anne house was lighted up by the setting sun. All its windows were opened and it looked uninhabited. It seemed to me as though there were a sort of sadness and feeling of desertion about it. Poor suburban house! I hope the owners of Loftshall will think of it sometimes.

I have now finished packing, written a fair number of pages, and taken Jack and Bob out for a walk. A telegram from Edith tells me that "all is as I wish," which means that Mr. Wilkes has made a just will.

To-morrow I shall say farewell to this hospitable roof under which I have lived for a whole month in an atmosphere of kindliness. I can already feel a pang at my heart as I think of the farewell!

LONDON.

Claridge's Hotel.

ANOTHER change of scene. There have been so many already in my life, beautiful and ugly ones, sad and gay ones. This morning I was in a friend's home, this evening I am in a cold, commonplace hotel. It is a mystery to me how I adapt myself to all these changes, and that I should feel at home everywhere, but I suppose this is another of Nature's secrets.

To pack and unpack our trunk is merely to cramp ourselves first and then to spread ourselves out. When we take our clothes out of the trunk, and all the various objects which have become more or less a part of ourselves, and when we spread them about the room we are spreading ourselves out. When we put all these things back in the trunk, we feel more or less cramped again. The comical side of these two gestures struck me to-day for the first time, and I laughed outright. As I

arranged my papers and pens on the writing-table I said aloud, "I am spreading myself out"; this seemed to me irresistibly droll. I certainly have plenty of room to spread myself out here in this blue room, with two windows, and a large dressing-room. From time to time Providence allows me a little luxury and the comfort that I have always loved, but not often. It evidently has its reasons for not spoiling me too much. When making my plans for this visit to England, I had not intended to stay at Claridge's. One day, though, in Paris, when taking tea at the Ritz, one of the head managers there told me that he was to be manager here, and asked me to put up here when I came to London. I promised him that I would and here I am, very comfortably installed, thanks to him. I wonder why I should have been brought to this solemn, aristocratic hotel? I shall know all in good time, no doubt.

It was very hard for me to leave St. Olaf, and yet only a month previously I had entered the gates as a stranger.

Jack and Bob were on the porch when I left. Up to the very last moment, they said the kindest things to me with their intelligent eyes and their tails. When they saw the carriage starting and me actually leaving, their expression was less joyful. The cat, who was dozing, merely opened its eyes. The housemaid had received orders to accompany me to London, and the gardener had cut me a magnificent bunch of roses.

On arriving at the hotel, I found a telegram from Edith and the visiting-cards of three of my acquaintances. One of these was that of Mrs. Nerwind, Ruby Talbot's friend.

All these things, flowers, telegrams, and cards, seemed to warm the atmosphere and to make me feel less lonely in this immense London. They also made me feel the active solicitude of the Power that I am serving, for it is this Power that caused me to have them. I smiled as I thought of all this, and I repeated, with scientific conviction, the words that an intuitive faith puts into the mouth of the priest, words which had always irritated me as I thought them empty words from a religious point of view. We are told that all roads lead to Rome, but certainly all roads lead still more surely to God.

London! I had always seen it when with friends. We had always been chattering so that my attention had been given first to one thing and then to another. I had each time had an impression of something colossal, and I had gone away regretting that I did not know more of it. This time I had made up my mind to see London alone. What joy it was to me to be able to wander about as I liked in this great metropolis, with its five million inhabitants. A crowd of memories, stored up ever since my former visits, now guided me. It seems to me that I am affected in the same way as the receiver of the Hertzian waves. I should not be surprised if I were the object of the same method.

Among the human agglomerations London and Paris are surely the most interesting, those towards which the greatest curiosity and the most thoughts converge. They represent two of the great races of the globe, two sexes, two temperaments, and they set each other off in the most curious way. I noticed this by comparing them.

London is Anglo-Saxon, masculine, and Protestant. Paris is Latin, feminine, and Catholic. All that is quite enough to give them different souls, and their souls certainly are different.

The surface of London is somewhat flat and is dominated, as it were, by the City with St. Paul's Cathedral, by commerce, law, and religion. Paris is crowned by hills, on the tops of which are a basilica, a mill with giddy sails, a Pantheon, the fields of its dead, and the cannon for its defence. Does not all that seem symbolic of its femininity?

London seems beautiful or ugly according to one's own mentality; it has a perfect fascination for me. I feel its immensity, its power, its multitude. Its low sky, its sun without rays, its yellow fogs all give it a look of the great North which charms me. The mist, of which people complain, softens its lines, attenuates its ugliness in a most artistic way, and gives it an exquisite greyish tone. The mists are most effective, too, and at times completely veil a certain part of the horizon. A faint breeze will perhaps lift them slightly, and a Gothic cathedral

appears, a huge bridge or the high stacks of some works. Sometimes a violent wind suddenly chases the mist away and one sees the panorama of a whole city. And in all this phantasmagoria Nature never repeats herself.

London gives me more and more the impression of an ant-hill. To realise our smallness is a proof of greatness and especially of future greatness. London then is an ant-hill, but a gigantic and marvellous one. I see interminable lines of little dwellings with windows, a few fine-looking houses, and then some higher buildings of six, seven, and even nine stories adorned with peculiarly hideous ornamentation and trespassing too much on the domain of the low sky. There are wide arteries, narrow grey side streets, an immense open space, Trafalgar Square, separating two centres of very different kinds of activity. There are squares where vehicles of all kinds drive along, there are green spaces, parks with flowers, beautiful trees, samples of meadows with a few cows and even sheep. I see the Thames with its huge bridges, the Thames, which is a business river here with its dark water, its boats, laden with heavy cargoes, struggling against the tide. I see a vast ebullition of life: the docks where there is the greatest physical effort, the City, the Strand, Piccadilly, Bond Street, Hyde Park, and above all that is colossal, dominating by the ideas and the beauty they represent, I see Westminster Abbey, the Houses of Parliament, Gothic buildings, churches, St. James's and Buckingham Palaces. After looking at the outlines, I have studied the expression of London. It seems to me severe and dull, but very virile. As to its moral atmosphere, it is strangely heavy and dry. I feel that it is lacking in many of the higher elements. Ideas and young blood are shut up in the University towns. There is only a minimum quantity of art. It is almost invisible in fact. The churches are closed six days of the week. The chief things exteriorised are the preoccupations about money matters, ambition, pride, snobbishness, strong energies, will, character, brutal passions, and all the suffering caused by excessive competition. London is a merchant city, keen on gain, venal, a city where the golden calf is manufactured and worshipped. In this merchant city, though,

there is the Gothic, spiritualistic, and Biblical soul, which ennobles it and makes it more aristocratic than that royal and imperial flag under the cover of which its traffic and its various operations are carried on. If I am not very much mistaken, it is to this soul that it owes its real greatness.

These then were some of my impressions during my morning walks. Whether I am right or not in my surmises, I have given my impressions just as I had them.

Paris is a millionaire too, but it has not the immensity of the English metropolis. Paris is the hive, under a high sky, with beautiful light, bluish mists, soft clouds and sunsets for which Nature works with infinite art. Its streets are well cut and there are many-storied houses on either side. Its avenues are planted with trees and are like so many rays of a star, with magnificent spaces where all the roads meet. Its river moves along joyfully and lightly. Paris, too, has its parks, its gardens, its green isles, its two woods, and a whole nation of statues. In its warm, live churches, there is ceaseless prayer and to this it owes its spirituality.

Like all old capitals, it has its beautiful jewels in stone: Notre-Dame, the St. Chapelle, and the Louvre. It has no kings now, but it still has its palaces. These palaces have become its museums, in which its immortal masterpieces, the great accumulators of beauty and of art, have taken the place of mortal man. Its architecture is neither heavy nor Gothic, but rather Grecian. All this makes everything seem light and gay and this raises the spirits instead of weighing on them.

The expression of Paris is joyful, changeable, infinitely varied. In its ambient air there are currents of general ideas and all the dreams of the young men of its University and of its schools. Love, idealism, sensuality, and a whole crowd of visible and invisible things are in the very air, fascinating some people, repelling others. We feel London and love it with our mentality. We feel Paris and love it with our temperament and with our very soul.

In our earthly capitals, there is a brilliant nucleus to be found of palaces and luxurious dwellings. There is wealth of every kind there, and individuals are clothed in fine, soft

stuffs, and adorned with valuable things. The brilliancy gradually diminishes, houses get smaller, less comfortable, poverty-stricken, and quite insufficient for the needs of the inhabitants. The very roads get narrower, beauty becomes more and more rare, the human face looks sad, sorrowful, or indifferent, the human body becomes enfeebled, the step heavy, clothing has neither shape nor colour, until at last all is mingled together in mortal darkness. This is the present state of our capitals. Under the action of the Being of beings, the luminous zone will gradually be extended, until at last it will be warm and vivifying to the very extremities. I am convinced of this and progress demands it.

London.

I have scarcely been here a week, and yet, thanks to English hospitality which I am always praising, I am taking part in the social life of London. I have been caught up and carried along, as it were, by the stream.

In the morning, I go out, either for a walk or a drive. In the afternoon I pay calls, go to the park, out to tea, and frequently end with bridge. I dine at the hotel and I find the scene in the dining-room always different and extremely interesting. I go into the drawing-room after dinner and stay there a short or a long time, according to the company I find. I then go to my own room and write a few pages. The light is so arranged over the bed that I can very well see to read there. When once I lie down for the night I feel that I have not wasted my day. I should have no objection to continuing this kind of life always.

Claridge's Hotel is well situated. It is right in the heart of Mayfair, but on a little island of silence and tranquillity. It is nevertheless only a stone's throw from Regent Street, Piccadilly, and Hyde Park.

There is nothing very imposing or monumental about the aspect of the aristocratic West End. The houses face the street and are various shades of grey, cream, pale yellow, and a reddish brown. the London colours. All these colours produce a warm tone, which harmonises well with the sky and the atmosphere.

The squares and crescents here and there break the regularity of the lines. The houses are rather narrow and in certain places look like boxes with openings. The architecture betrays a taste that has been very little cultivated. It is, in fact, almost childish. It contents itself with reproducing, generally very badly, the owner's reminiscences perhaps of Italy or Greece. These strange constructions, ornamented with porches, terraces, or balconies, all placed close against each other, look like so many different samples of houses. The flowers in the window-boxes somewhat soften the ugliness of the general effect. Here and there, though, there are some charming dwellings, surrounded by gardens. These are the homes of the aristocrats. In Italy they would be called palaces. At all hours in the day, carriages arrive in front of the hall-door steps, and elegant women get in or out of the various equipages. All this is pleasant to see, and lends a certain animation to the streets. Our Faubourg St. Germain is somewhat sad-looking, but there is a superior air about it. The French house, between a courtyard and a garden, has always seemed to me the ideal dwelling.

The two great social centres are Belgravia and Mayfair.

Belgravia! Shakespeare says, "What's in a name?" In my opinion there is a great deal in a name. It is the garment of the thing itself, and the name is often better than the thing. The magic of that name, Belgravia, is felt beyond the ocean. It acts like a loadstone on the millions and millionaires of America. Yesterday, as I was going through this Holy of Holies of English society, I remembered the famous advice, "Stick to Belgravia," that is to the aristocracy, and people do stick to it. The hard and often dirty hands of snobs and parvenus clinging to it would have torn it down long ago, if its roots were not so deep and so well covered by the earth. Its roots have never been laid bare by a Revolution like those of the French aristocracy, and that is why it is still standing upright.

Belgravia and Mayfair represent two mentalities, two societies, two epochs. Belgravia is conservative to the very core. Mayfair is as eclectic as it is possible to be in politics, in philosophy, and in morals. Belgravia is very proper, Mayfair is elegant

and *chic*. Belgravia is the Past, but the Past living; Mayfair is the transition. When people cannot be of Belgravia, they are of Mayfair.

Paris has a sort of Belgravia in the Faubourg St. Germain, on the left bank of the Seine, just as it has a sort of Mayfair in the fashionable quarters of the right bank of the river.

Belgravia, which includes Belgrave Square, Grosvenor Crescent, etc., has a peculiarly cold look. One feels that one would find a traditional decorum there, ready-made opinions, and well-disciplined sentiments. The ladies' caps there must all be pointed, narrow, and stiff. When strolling through the streets in the district, one feels something heavy and glacial on one's shoulders.

In the neighbourhood of Mayfair, Park Lane, Berkeley Square, Grosvenor Square, etc., there is a more gay and open expression about the houses. The white or striped blinds flap joyfully in the wind and the flowers are more artistically arranged. Some of the houses, those in Park Lane more particularly, have quite a coquettish look.

They must be full of delightful curiosities and knick-knacks, and the furniture is probably French, Louis XV. and Louis XVI. There are more tea gowns than caps there, I expect, and, unless I am much mistaken, flirtation and bridge must have great success. Novelists are very fond of putting their worldly heroines into these houses, and this I can quite understand, as the atmosphere must suit them admirably.

Beside these two fashionable centres, there are some spacious districts in the West End, which are quite provincial and which give one an impression of comfort and tranquillity.

There is a look of masculine elegance and correctness about Pall Mall. Through the windows of its famous clubs, one always sees figures seated in huge arm-chairs, absorbed in the reading of the daily papers, and these give one a sensation of melancholy and of boredom.

In the early morning, Hyde Park is delightfully fresh. It is full of babies and little children, all dressed in white, of boys and girls on ponies, the latter with their hair flying in the wind

Convalescents and invalids are to be seen, too, taking the air, accompanied by their nurses. The nurse in her black or blue uniform is a very prominent figure in London streets.

Towards eleven, the society people of Belgravia and Mayfair make their appearance. From eleven to one they are to be seen on foot or on horseback, in automobile or carriage, flirting and gossiping, to the great admiration of their usual public, a public made up of the middle class. The following morning, certain newspapers will give an account of this parade, and inform their readers that the Duchess of M. wore a very becoming tailor costume of grey cloth, that Lady C. wore a red dress and a black hat, that Lord G. was wearing blue spectacles, and so on. This important information will be transmitted to Paris for the edification of the American women there.

This daily exhibition is not in vogue on our side of the English Channel. The morning walk or drive in the Bois de Boulogne is elegant, but much more private. Our middle-class people are not in the least interested in the doings of celebrated society people. They profess an absolute indifference, which I believe is quite sincere, but, in any case, they have too much dignity and pride to go and stand watching them.

And in this privileged zone known as the West End, one sees, at times, some strange creatures, regular nightmares, clothed in rags. The faces of these creatures seem to have lost all expression.

They do not speak to anyone, they do not ask for anything, and they do not seem to notice the brilliant surroundings in which they find themselves. I met one of them, the other day, with a dress up to her ankles. It was of all lengths and burnt yellow by some acid. From whence can such poor outcasts come, to what hell on earth do they return? Are they not sent out there to remind all these over-rich people that, not far away, there is a region of hunger, for although the English metropolis may have the force of numbers, it also has that of unutterable misery. This reminder, I am glad to say, is always heard and felt by someone.

The street itself is not gay in London, as it is in Paris. People

here have a hard, firm expression and a somewhat fixed gaze, as though they had blinkers on. The crowd always seems active, but not joyful. There are too many straight lines in all outlines. The shops look as though their owners have merely unpacked into the windows. There is nothing graceful or artistic to rest the eyes. The very flowers are sold by the most lamentable or grotesque-looking women and girls.

In Paris the street has the most charming elegance and femininity. There is always a sort of hum and bewilderment, it is most undisciplined, but it vibrates with a hundred things. There are marvels of taste and art to be seen in our streets. Then there are our lively *midinettes* and the flowers being wheeled along near the foot-paths. Our streets are most inviting for a quiet stroll or for a chat and they are curiously restful.

I like the London streets, though; the traffic is automatic and admirably well regulated. This gives me an impression of virile force and even of protection. It is enlivened by its dangerous, ugly, but rapid cabs, which cross it in every direction, their wheels and varnish flashing right and left. During the season these cabs appear to be carrying living busts of men and women in evening dress. The effect is most curious. An Englishman never looks better than when framed by his hansom, either with a cigar between his lips, reading a newspaper, or in correct evening dress on his way to some social function. It is really a man's vehicle, for one has to climb into it and jump out of it. The banging of its two doors seem to say, "Fly along, time is money," and the cab does fly along.

In London, it is not the foot passenger waiting for his omnibus, but the omnibus offering itself to the foot-passenger, and that really seems more logical. The omnibus is yellow, brown, green, or cream-colour, with all colours in its advertisements. There are two lines of omnibuses on either side of the road, the one going and the other coming. The top is considered more *chic* than inside. People can fancy themselves on the top of a mail-coach, and, when they cannot have the real thing here, they like to have the nearest approach. The consequence is that fine dresses, light sunshades, and startling hats are to be

seen on the top of the democratic vehicle. The driver of the horse-drawn omnibus has well-cut clothes, a flower in his button-hole, a dust rug over his knees, and he drives sometimes like a true sportsman. In England omnibus and cab drivers seem to have a sort of pride in their work and to get a certain distinction by it. I have even been told that among these drivers are to be found the younger sons of some good families. I should not be surprised if this were true, and I am quite sure that I paid my fare one day to a gentleman. The English driver is a horse lover. The French driver is a mere peasant incapable of seeing anything else in the animal than an instrument of gain.

All foreigners visiting London are struck with the appearance and fine character of the policemen. These kind giants, who are to be found everywhere, watch over and regulate the traffic with a coolness and intelligence worthy of all praise. They, too, understand horses. I have often seen them, during a rather long block, stroke the impatient animals and say a few words to calm them. They know how to stop the traffic at the right moment. They just raise their hand with a slow, authoritative gesture, which is most dignified and which is always obeyed because it is always in good time. Our little policemen walk up and down the refuges in a nervous way, stop the traffic suddenly, without any regard for the drivers or their horses, and call out "Drive on, Drive on," for the simple sake of talking. All this shows up the difference between the Anglo-Saxon and French temperaments.

I had an opportunity of seeing the London policemen on three occasions which were great tests for them: the King's wedding, Queen Victoria's Jubilee, and the coronation of the King Edward VII. I shall never forget their coolness, and the kindliness, mingled with respect, with which they picked up and looked after the women who fainted with heat and fatigue. On the second day of the Jubilee, we were driving in Kensington in a victoria. A policeman, seeing that our carriage was in danger of being overturned in the immense crowd, stepped behind it, laid his hand on the hood and kept back the living stream in this way until we got through the worst part.

"We should have been overturned if it had not been for you, policeman," I said to him by way of showing that I appreciated his services. He raised two fingers to his forehead and coloured with pleasure. The policeman belongs to the people and incarnates their best qualities. These qualities well directed yield considerable forces. Our neighbours understand this better than we do.

Among the various ebullitions of life in London, that of the City interests me more particularly. Its grave, silent, well-regulated activity always excites my admiration. This morning I went into the very thick of the traffic, the most animated spot of the great ant-hill. I walked about for a long time, looking at the narrow, dirty streets, at the grey houses, and at the stream of individuals going in and out. Looking at this superficially, it would have seemed ugly and petty. What grandeur there is, though, under this unimposing exterior. Is not this the axis of the formidable machine known as the British Empire? From these insignificant-looking houses, do not orders and words go forth, at all hours, which will move distant fortunes? Do not foreign energies, in return, bring ruin or prosperity here? Have not the human insects, at work there, millions of cells behind their foreheads? Do they not send out their forces throughout the whole universe, by means of that network of telegraphic wires which are a continuation of them and also by means of those more formidable, invisible fluids, in the midst of which they move and by means of which they are moved? As I said this to myself, all these things, dark streets, offices, gloomy warehouses, and sordid business men, immediately took gigantic proportions in my imagination and excited a sort of respect and pride within me. I very soon felt overwhelmed, as it were, by the consciousness of these forces. I felt the need of getting away from it all and I hailed a cab and drove to Richmond Park. When once there I had an open space, magnificent trees, the singing of the birds, tame rabbits, hinds with their large dreamy eyes, and deer, standing in a circle and moving their heads in a rhythmical way. Nothing can give the idea of the freshness and the restfulness of all this, on coming straight from the City.

The sensation of it was delightful. It is very certain that we do not yet know how to enjoy life.

London.

Sunday in London in the twentieth century. Church, church parade afterwards in Hyde Park; luncheon, tea, and bridge at an American woman's, dinner parade at the Carlton. It seemed scarcely possible that I could only be forty-five minutes from Wimbledon, in the same country, and at the same epoch!

Yesterday morning I went to St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, as I wanted to see these English people pray, in order to feel nearer to their soul. I followed the crowd afterwards to what they call church parade. We may have a weakness for decorations, but our neighbours certainly have a weakness for parades. Every Sunday, after service, people of all conditions and from all parts, even from the suburbs, seem to be brought, whether they will or not, to a certain part of Hyde Park. Some come to show themselves off, others to look on. It would be difficult to say whether the actors or the spectators get the most pleasure out of it, but they all appear to be satisfied. The women are in their Sunday clothes and the men wear frock coats. There are no carriages, everyone walks in a slow, peculiar way, as though performing a sort of solemn rite. This lasts an hour; the crowd then gradually gets smaller and finally vanishes altogether. A week later everyone will arrive again, at the same spot, and the same thing will be repeated. This strange Sabbath performance, which is a very old institution, had always seemed to me grotesque. Yesterday it struck me in quite another way. The idea occurred to me that I was perhaps looking on at one of Nature's very interesting methods, at one of those amalgams from which she draws the new elements that are necessary. With this idea in my mind, I began to observe, as keenly as possible, the sight before me. It was an extraordinary mixture of the aristocracy with the upper and lower middle class, the working class, the dregs of the people, and regular outcasts. All these human creatures, from all ranks of life, seemed to be all mixed together. In reality, they were

separated by distances that it would take generations to clear. There was no sign of any fusion, and yet I could see that they all made an impression on each other; there were, no doubt, mutual dislikes or fancies. Love, hatred, envy, jealousy, ambition, vanity, and a crowd of sentiments were exteriorised, and all this quickened the collective and the individual life. I felt the invisible work. It reminded me of what takes place in the wine vats when the grapes are all thrown in, sound, blemished, or rotten. The noise of the working of the grapes used to delight my ear as a child. I remember the swarms of brown insects that used to buzz round the huge receptacle, and I looked up now mechanically, in the air, for the agents of these human reactions. In French provincial towns there is also the Sabbath walk, before or after Vespers, but there is nothing so characteristic about that. And these parades are repeated throughout the British Empire, in India, in Australia, and in Africa. It must certainly be that the race demands this.

On leaving Hyde Park, I went to Mrs. Winthrop's in South Kensington. I had to go along silent, deserted streets, which had quite a Sabbath atmosphere. I love London like this, for in this atmosphere, which spiritualises it, it gives me the impression of a colossal chained force. The gay, light restfulness of Sunday seems fitting for Paris, and the stiff, solemn calm of the Sabbath for the English metropolis.

On my way to the house to which I was going, I thought of Mrs. Winthrop's Odyssey. Five years previously she had arrived at the Hotel C. with an elderly cousin and a maid, and I had made her acquaintance then. She belongs to one of the best families of Philadelphia. Her husband had lately died and she had come into possession of a considerable fortune. Her two daughters, Nora and Frances, were not out. Affected, like so many other girls, with a mania for the aristocracy, they had wanted to come to Europe and their mother had meekly brought them. Her ignorance of life generally, and of our ways and customs in particular, was amusing and almost pathetic. She had not the remotest idea of her own responsibility and of the danger she was running. Her own innate good sense, her straight-

forwardness, and remarkable intuition were her sole weapons. She spent the spring in Paris, without advancing much so far as society was concerned, and she then went to Homburg. She met there the woman who was to make things more easy for her. This was Mrs. X., the American woman who discovered the Old World and opened it to her countrywomen. Young, beautiful, and enterprising, she had entered a certain circle of English society and had become all-powerful there. Providence made her its agent for Anglo-American marriages. Every marriage strengthened her position and increased her influence. She never failed to put her hand on new arrivals and to introduce them into her circle, a circle which was more smart than *comme il faut*. She persuaded Mrs. Winthrop to take a house in London and helped her to arrange everything. During the season she helped the mother and daughters on to the social ladder, after initiating them into the manners and customs of London and giving them the necessary instruction with regard to aristocratic etiquette. Thanks to her influence, Nora and Frances were presented at Court. They had great success, as they were beautiful and elegant, and as soon as it was known that they had already inherited their share of their father's money and that they would come into much more later on, suitors gathered round them, like flies round honey.

It was at this moment that Mrs. Winthrop proved her own skill and discernment. She managed to eliminate the men of doubtful character. She listened to the advice of other people, but she used her own judgment, and, in the end, her daughters made very good marriages. One is now the wife of a viscount's son and the other is married to a baronet. Both young men were in the diplomatic service and had good careers before them. An American woman's introduction into English society is as costly as an election. Mrs. Winthrop was careful not to tell me what she had had to pay for hers. Her ambition went no further; even for a title, she did not care to give up her own liberty. What she had seen of the aristocracy inspired her with a wholesome awe.

After the marriage of her daughters, I asked her whether she intended to return to Philadelphia.

"Oh no," she replied promptly, "they are too *bourgeois* there."

I could not help smiling on seeing that she had grasped the meaning of the word.

"In America," she continued, "money only gives us luxury and comfort, and everyone can have all that. In Europe, it can procure for you a crowd of other things and it is more valuable on that account. I never felt the joy of being rich until I came here."

In consequence of this very characteristic reasoning, Mrs. Winthrop decided to remain in London. She bought a small, but charming house in South Kensington, a mere box-room as she calls it. She spends six months of the year there and the rest of the time she travels, making a long stay always in Paris and in Italy. She has become an infatuated collector. The ultra-worldly society in which she moves has not affected her own intrinsic purity, but it has affected her moral sense. Although she would not upon any account be guilty of certain things herself, they no longer shock her in others. She now shuts her eyes to a crowd of things that she would not have tolerated formerly. She has no scruples whatever about playing bridge on Sundays. This alone shows the elasticity that her Philadelphian conscience has acquired.

In England, when American mothers have once given their daughters and their dollars, it is discovered that they are vulgar and impossible and they are left out in the cold. Mrs. Winthrop always has plenty of people at her house, either friends or acquaintances. I complimented her on this one day.

"Do you know why?" she asked, shrugging her shoulders.

"Because you are very agreeable and very kind."

"Oh no, because I have one of the best French *chefs* in London and a French butler who is a good judge of wines. I am not so simple-minded," she continued, "as when you first knew me. One can live a long time in Philadelphia without learning much, and one can learn a great deal by living a short time here."

I was thinking of those words and of the bitterness that lay underneath them, when my cab drew up at Mrs. Winthrop's

door. She welcomed me with that warm cordiality which has not yet been spoilt by snobbishness. Whilst we were exchanging news, I looked with pleasure at this happy woman, whose face still retains its youthful expression. Her fair hair is losing its colour, the wrinkles are beginning to come on her brow, and her cheeks are losing their freshness, but her blue eyes are still limpid, her lips fresh, and her figure beautiful.

"With whom am I going to lunch?" I asked, a little later.

"With some very agreeable people," she replied, "and it is not very easy to get such people here."

"It is not very easy anywhere," I said.

"You will have Lord and Lady Neville," she continued.

"Oh, that is delightful," I exclaimed. Some twenty years ago, at Aix-les-Bains, Lady Neville had been one of my great admirations. I used to go for my glass of Chasles water every day, at the same hour she went, for the mere pleasure of looking at her, for she was so beautiful.

"People think very badly of her," went on my hostess, "but she is received everywhere and cultivated as though we all thought nice things about her."

"Is that because she is feared?" I asked.

"It is because she is a great lady and people cannot afford to quarrel with her. I do not believe all the stories about her. I have always found her very pleasant and nice and she is most friendly with me. She always declares that I rest her. I have no idea whether that is a compliment."

"You may be sure it is," I said.

"Then, too, she is still fascinating. I have never met with such a magnetic creature."

American women, by a sort of scientific intuition, were the first to use this word in the above sense.

"And what about Lord Neville?" I asked, inquisitively.

"He is the husband of Lady Neville. Is not that enough?"

I looked at my hostess again with surprise. She had certainly learnt a great deal in Europe.

"I have also invited Sir Edward and Lady Herbert," continued Mrs. Winthrop. "They are the owners of Ferncross, a

magnificent place with shooting, fishing, etc. They have splendid thoroughbreds, famous kennels, five children, all very fine specimens, and a nursery for ten children. Their week-ends are noted and people stoop to anything to get invited. Under such conditions, it might be possible to live in the country nine months of the year. When I see these English houses, I am not sure that we Americans really have the better part. We agitate, but our cousins act, and I fancy more effectively than we do."

"Your tasks are different, that is all," I said.

"That may be. Anyhow Lady Herbert is the only sportswoman who does not irritate me. She never poses, there is no affectation about her, she is as straight as an arrow, very modern, very up to date, and yet all right. She is not pretty, rather plain, in fact, but no one notices that. She does just what she likes with her husband."

"There are not many Englishwomen who can pride themselves on that."

"No; but I have noticed that an Englishman gives in more easily to his wife when she is above him by birth, and this is the case with Katherine Herbert. She is distinctly a lady. I am sure you will like her. Then there will be Mr. Cecil Gray, one of those society men who are nothing, who have neither money nor position; but who go everywhere, and are indispensable. Husbands confide their wives to them, women consult them and make their confessions to them. They know all the hidden things of society and they can tell any number of amusing and shocking stories. This kind of man has been an astonishment to me. Cecil Gray is a gentleman, and he is of good family. He fought in the Transvaal War and was severely wounded. That has given him a halo. People are rather afraid of him, because of his keen wit. I do not like him, but——"

"But when Lady Neville is invited, he has to be invited, is that it?" I asked.

"Yes, he is very devoted to her," answered Mrs. Winthrop, slightly embarrassed. "Oh, it is all platonic," she continued,

"and pure snobbishness. He is twenty-five years younger than she is. I have also invited my old *beau*, Lord Kimble," she added, changing the subject hurriedly.

"Why did you not marry him?" I asked.

"I should have been obliged to marry his rheumatism, his sister, who lives with him, and all the county. That would have been a great deal for a free American woman. Joking apart, he is an excellent man and not a bore. The evil deeds of Smart Society keep him from getting dull. He criticises it unmercifully, but he frequents it all the same, because he finds the best bridge-players there and amusing people. Human morality——"

The entrance of her guests, who arrived all together, prevented my knowing what Mrs. Winthrop thought of human morality, and I am sorry.

The luncheon did honour to our hostess's French *chef* and the wines to the butler's palate. The reverential way in which he poured them proved that he was fully aware of their worth.

The extremely feminine little dining-room, the arrangement of the flowers, the table linen with its valuable guipure lace, the quaint shapes of all the glass and silver revealed American taste, and this taste contrasted with the English faces present.

I watched Lady Neville with that indiscreet curiosity of the novelist, of which I am often ashamed. Ever since the days of Aix-les-Bains, I had only seen her face from afar, at the theatre, or in the tea rooms. I could now see all the work that Dame Nature had been doing during the last twenty years. I was pleased to note that this work had been done slowly, respectfully, and almost artistically. Her figure was still good under the silk and lace blouse. Unfortunately, her henna-dyed hair, her painted lips, and the little bits of gold in her ivory teeth gave her a patched-up look. Her almond-shaped eyes, the slightly aquiline form of her nose, and the curve of her mouth gave her a dignified and noble profile. If it had not been for the keen, cynical, mocking smile one could not have believed her capable of the adventures attributed to her. She looked as though she had been either a *grande amoureuse*, or a

great humbug, and I could not make up my mind which, as I could only feel her charm—the charm peculiar to women who have been greatly loved. Like the rays from the sun, the rays of love last a long time after love itself has disappeared. As long as they are there, there will always be some warmth and light; and with Lady Neville, they were still there.

On looking at Lady Herbert, I had a delightful impression of simple, wholesome, and active life. Her physique corresponded exactly with what Mrs. Winthrop had said about her moral nature. She had chestnut-brown hair, brilliant with sap, and she wore it turned back from her forehead; keen, intelligent eyes, a large, laughing mouth, a sunburnt complexion, and brusque, but extremely natural gestures. She was a woman intended for short dresses, horses, country life, and travel in distant countries.

The three masculine guests were of the "smart" category. Lord Neville was a little man, with a bronze complexion, a quick glance, a rough moustache, and a something aggressive, which prevented him from appearing insignificant.

I lost my heart to Sir Edward at once. There was nothing of the intentional stiffness of the society man about him, but the frank, free manner of the sportsman. His light blue eyes, regular Norman eyes, smiled easily and betrayed a fund of gaiety and good humour. There was that mixture of timidity and force about him which is the charm of the Northern man.

I did not like Mr. Cecil Gray, but he interested me. His elegance seemed almost geometrical, so perfect was it. This is the great defect, though, of English elegance. His features were remarkably handsome, but his keen glance, his clean-shaven lips, the corners of which were often drawn in by his ironical expression, gave him an ascetic hardness which was both fascinating and objectionable. He was the kind of man who would treat women badly, but who would make conquests of them.

Lord Kimble was delightful. His hair and moustache were snow-coloured, his complexion rather ruddy, and his black eyes were keen and intelligent under their bushy eyebrows.

In his whole person there was that admirable trimness which is so characteristic of the elderly English aristocrat.

All the guests were more or less cosmopolitan. Paris served, as it always does, as a subject for breaking the ice and starting conversation. I was asked about my impressions of England. I mentioned that I had just been spending a month at Wimbledon, and this caused a little cold current which, although invisible, could be felt. It is not *chic* to have friends in the suburbs and it should not be owned. Mrs. Winthrop hastened to add that my friends were the Wilkeses of Loftshall, a county family, and that they had come into their inheritance whilst I was with them.

This explanation warmed the ambient atmosphere again in the most miraculous way, and as soon as my American friend had found a way to let the honourable company know that I was staying at Claridge's, the thermometer went up still higher. Thanks to this experience, I was able to seize the exteriorisation of snobbishness, and this delighted me. I must own, though, that I was not proud of myself, for I realised that I felt a certain satisfaction in going up again in the public esteem, although it was for such a wretched reason. It would scarcely be fair to mention the failings of my neighbours and pass over my own. It costs me something to make this confession and, even whilst making it, there is the secret wish to go up again in my own estimation and in that of other people. We certainly are a droll mixture, we human beings.

"I do enjoy spending the week-end in London," said Lady Herbert, with an accent of intense satisfaction.

"And to be spared entertaining Londoners," added Mr. Cecil Gray, a flash of gaiety softening the expression of his face. "That is very pleasant for all of us who are frequently at Ferncross," he continued.

Lady Herbert shrugged her shoulders. "You all know my sentiments," she said. "If one could have one's intimate friends, the week-ends would be delightful; but we have to invite people for whom we do not care, awful parvenus, bores, and people who are bored by coming—our enemies, even."

"Our enemies, above all," put in Lord Neville.

"What a terrible obligation!" I exclaimed. "With our undisciplined character, we French people could never bring ourselves to do as you do. I admire you."

"Oh, do not admire us. We sacrifice our liberty and our taste merely to follow the fashion, for the sake of our vanity and for the sake of appearances."

"I say, Kimble," interrupted Sir Edward, "do not give us away in the presence of a French woman and an American woman."

"Oh, English people never really think all the bad things they say about themselves," I remarked. "I fancy it is only a way of fishing for compliments. You make all sorts of apologies, for instance, about your climate, but if we agree with you that it really is bad, you seem disappointed."

"Do you really believe what you say?" asked Lord Kimble, smiling.

"I am quite sure it is true," I answered.

"And I, too," added Mrs. Winthrop.

"I notice that you move about more and more," I continued. "If your household were not perfectly organised there would be the most hopeless disorder. You are accustomed to these week-ends, but do you really enjoy them?"

"Yes," answered Lady Neville, "provided our hosts are endowed with tact and intuition. A certain geniality then develops between the guests and, after shaking hands, they are at once in communion with each other. The shortness of the stay gives zest to the various amusements and to the meetings. On the other hand it sometimes happens that you get amongst an impossible crowd. You gnash your teeth for forty-eight hours and you bristle up inwardly to such a degree that you want to pick a quarrel with everyone. That sensation has taught me to pity flowers that are all put *pêle-mêle* into a vase."

"Some of them die of it," I said.

"Oh, yes; and I can understand that."

These words were uttered so emphatically that I was sur-

prised to hear them from a woman so perfectly mistress of herself.

"It is a curious thing," said Lord Neville to me. "Frenchmen are more restless than Englishmen, and yet Englishmen move about more than Frenchmen."

"Yes," I said. "It seems to me that Nature keeps saying to you all the time: 'Move on, move on!'"

Mr. Cecil Gray glanced at me and then said in a mocking way: "Nature does not want us to get mildewed or rusty, no doubt; with our damp climate and our lazy mentality, stagnation might be dangerous. What do you think, Madame Pierre de Coulevain?"

"I think you are right," I replied, quite seriously.

"There, that is all I get for my humility. I was fishing, too, hoping to be contradicted; but nothing of the kind."

"French women, I mean society women, live a less active life than we do," said Lady Herbert. "It seems to me that their life cannot be full enough, and I often wonder whether they do not get bored."

"They get up late," I answered, "and they spend a great deal of time on their toilette. Then they dream, think, and talk a great deal. Their time is broken up by all this."

"An Englishwoman has a certain social position to keep up, she does not belong to herself. She belongs to her county, to her friends, to her tenants. Then, too, she has to look after her house and her children."

"And her lord and master," I added; "and very frequently he is not the easiest person to satisfy."

"Do you hear that, Sir Edward?" asked our hostess.

"Yes; but it does not apply to me. I know that I am the least exacting of husbands."

"The least exacting of English husbands would be more exacting than ours."

"American women are always inciting our women to rebellion," said the young man with his gay smile. "I begin to tremble for our conjugal authority."

"Conjugal authority!" exclaimed Mrs. Winthrop, indig-

nantly. "That is an expression you would never hear in America, and a thing that we do not know at all."

"Providence has perhaps sent you over this side, so that you may learn what it means," I said.

"Thank God, I am too old to need that lesson now," and, with this thanksgiving, uttered with comic fervour, our hostess looked round and gave the signal for leaving the table. We then went into the drawing-room and found two bridge-tables ready for us.

"The position of an English hostess in her country house is no sinecure, is it?" I said to Lady Herbert, enjoying the odour of the tiny cup of coffee that had just been handed to me.

"A sinecure! No, indeed it is not. If it were only a question of hospitality and all the duties connected with that it would not be so onerous. Occasionally we have to find a husband for a poor girl of good family, or there is a younger son to introduce to some influential man. It may be, too, that there is an election for which our services are needed, and if we do not succeed in these difficult undertakings we lose our prestige. Last year I arranged two splendid marriages. I obtained an excellent post for a young man in a most critical situation. I can rest on my laurels now—until the services I rendered are forgotten."

"That will not be long," put in Mr. Cecil Gray.

"That is consoling, is it not? And the trouble and worry all those things give us! The three white hairs I have lately discovered are, no doubt, the outcome of my work in making out my lists of people to invite. You see, it is a case of blending faults and qualities, wit and stupidity, pleasant and disagreeable characters, in such a way as to create an agreeable atmosphere. The result is not always a happy one, and that is annoying. You see, when Edward has not amusing people around him, he begins at once to think of his stable, of his kennel, or of his election, and he does not help me in the least. I have to exert myself then until I am nearly dead. No matter, though," she continued with a bright smile; "it is a satisfac-

tion to think that one is working for one's country, that one is useful and necessary. I would rather have a difficult rôle than an insignificant one."

"Yes; and yet with all this our hospitality and our houses are getting a bad name," remarked Mr. Cecil Gray, pretending to be serious.

"Ah, and why?" asked Sir Edward, honestly surprised.

"We scandalise America."

"Good heavens!"

"Yes; one of your countrywomen, Mrs. Winthrop, was reproaching me yesterday with our loose ways, our immorality, in fact. I used all my eloquence, for the sake of my country, in trying to persuade her that we are not worse than other people, but that we are even better. I could not convince her. When she was driven into a corner she told me a very droll story, a perfect gem, but it certainly is not quite to our credit."

"Is it a shocking story?" asked Lady Neville.

"Rather."

"Well, tell it us then."

"My friend is a very pretty American widow. She told me that she was invited to B— for the Christmas festivities. There were duchesses and countesses there, but nevertheless the finest suite of rooms was given to her. She was very much flattered and somewhat embarrassed by this honour, and she spoke of it to Lady C—, one of her countrywomen.

"But, my dear goose," replied the other laughing, "no one wants the rooms that you have."

"Are they haunted?" asked Mrs. L— in terror.

"No; but there is no room leading into them."

She declared that she did not understand at first, and then Lady C— had to tell her plainly, showing her the arrangement of the other rooms and the convenience of certain passages. She discovered, then, why the rooms at the end of a corridor had been assigned to her.

"The blue rooms at B—!" exclaimed Mrs. Winthrop. "Why, I am always put there when I stay at B—."

There was a roar of laughter at her words, and Mr. Cecil Gray bowed to his hostess.

"Allow me to congratulate you, Mrs. Winthrop," he said.

"Well," she began, blushing. "I should never——"

"Do not blush, Mrs. Winthrop," said Lord Neville, in a cutting tone, that was almost aggressive. "There are not many women in our set to whom those rooms could have been offered. It is a great honour——"

"I fancy Mrs. L— did not much relish the honour," continued Mr. Gray. "I told her that in England, France, and America, there were houses where the hosts, like the gods, favoured lovers, and that there were others where they were not tolerated. She did not believe me, but nothing will restore us to favour now in her eyes. Underneath her indignation there is also a certain rancour that a pretty woman always feels, if she is respected too much. She will never in her life forget her experience at B—."

"Oh, Cecil, do not let us have feminine psychology," interrupted Lady Neville, with her provoking smile. "Bridge is more entertaining."

Our hostess, who had not yet recovered from what she had just heard, thereupon invited us to take our seats at the little green tables.

When playing cards, there are certain peculiarities which show the difference between the Anglo-Saxon and the French characters. The Englishman brings into his game a mathematical strictness; he keeps to the rules as nearly as possible. The Frenchman goes as far away from them as possible. The Englishman deals the cards in a stiff, regular way. The Frenchman slightly rounds his arm and deals quickly. The Englishman starts in a bold, daring way, as though ready to face fortune, whatever it may be. The Frenchman rather holds back, plays slowly, either so that he may thoroughly enjoy that emotion caused by what is unknown—a sensation so dear to the gamester—or because he has a certain dread. During the fight the Englishman is coldly impassive and perfectly collected, whilst the Frenchman is nervous and at high tension.

At cards, just as in all sports, the Englishman treats a woman on an equal footing. He does not grant her any privileges, and he expects her to be perfectly straight. The Frenchman is always more or less affected by her presence. When she is playing, he is always rather less strict, he allows himself to talk, says some amusing things, does not trouble about keeping his attention on the game, and always puts it down to her if he loses.

It always makes me rather nervous to sit down to bridge with an Englishman. Yesterday it fell to my lot to have Lord Kimble for my partner and, as he is a noted good player, I had considerable misgivings. During the first hand I played absolutely correctly. I gradually fell into my usual habits and followed my inspiration. Every minute I kept meeting his quick, questioning look from under his thick eyebrows and a mocking smile moved the hairs of his moustache. This amused me, and all the more so as luck was with us. The Sabbath calm came in through the open windows. The sound of church bells and the music of the Salvation Army fell on our ears like a reproach. I felt slightly uncomfortable, and our innocent amusement seemed to me like something clandestine and in bad taste. I should never have felt anything of the kind in France. It is extraordinary that the environment should have such an effect on the individual.

We had tea between two rubbers. The footman who brought it in did not look in the least shocked at our transgression. He had probably seen worse things than this.

"Is it not better to play bridge on Sunday than to slander our neighbours?" asked Mrs. Winthrop, taking her place at the tea-table.

"There!" exclaimed Mr. Gray. "It is always with that kind of reasoning that women ease their conscience. I have heard that a hundred times. Women cannot sin in a straightforward way."

"My conscience is perfectly easy," answered Mrs. Winthrop rather drily.

"So much the better; for that is more comfortable."

Our hostess went through the ceremony with true American carelessness. Her pretty hands, with their diamond rings, moved about among the fragile china, filling the cups, putting in sugar or not, passing bread and butter or cake to those who already had some, and not passing it to those who had none. She went on chattering gaily all the time.

"Would you play high stakes as you played the last rubber?" Lord Kimble asked me with his tantalising smile.

"Oh, no," I answered; "but when the stakes are of no importance it is amusing to play according to one's intuitions, and trust to luck. That is the real enjoyment of cards for me."

"High stakes are terrible," remarked Lady Herbert. "One does not feel free, and one is absolutely paralysed by the fear of making mistakes; and one makes them, of course. At Ferncross, this winter, I remember declaring no trumps with cards not good enough and we lost. My partner forgot himself enough to utter a few words for which he would have had to answer to my husband under any other circumstances. As host, Edward wanted to pay the whole sum. The man refused, and he apologised to me, but the affair was very disagreeable and I would not have a repetition of it for anything in the world."

"I would never have high stakes in my house," said Mrs. Winthrop. "My conscience would be upset."

"You are free to do as you like; but if one belongs to a group one is obliged to do as others do. There are, in our set, at present, certain people who are making their living out of bridge. They would not go to your house if they did not expect to leave it richer than they entered it. If they stopped coming, others would, too. Your house might be more respectable on that account, but it would not be so lively and your husband and friends would not be pleased. We have to receive them and even to thank them for coming," said Lady Herbert in a resigned way, as she put a slice of lemon in her tea.

"We are telling you about our passion for bridge," said

Lady Neville, turning to me; "but it is being played in France, now."

"Yes; that is another fine instance of transmission of ideas. This new folly is rather regrettable so far as we are concerned, as it does away with conversation, and that is a pity."

"Can you understand the sudden success that this game had?" asked Sir Edward, doubling up a piece of bread and butter.

"Oh, yes; it was started by Smart Society, and everyone took it up at once out of snobbishness. And then, too, it does not seem like a mere game of chance; there is something scientific about it. It is an elegant sort of game, a trifle wicked and *chic*. It is impossible to analyse this quality, and yet I fancy that it is the secret of the attraction of bridge. It has been the transition, too, between whist which is too solemn and poker which is too vulgar. Its cleverly graduated combinations produce a sort of cerebral excitement, like that produced by tea or champagne. It is essentially the game of the twentieth century, and it quite belongs to the automobile and cake-walk epoch. There must be hidden affinities between it and our present mentality."

"Well, if that is not a good study of the psychology of bridge! How did you find all that out?"

"Oh, do not ask that; I cannot tell at all," I replied.

"And this *chic* game, as you call it, has been a regular agent of demoralisation," remarked Lord Kimble.

"Oh, come," protested Mrs. Winthrop, "do not slander our beloved bridge. It is quite harmless for good people, and it is very fascinating."

No one answered this remark, and our hostess little dreamt of the satire she had just uttered.

"I suppose you do not play cards at Ferncross on the Sabbath day?" I asked Lady Herbert.

"Oh, no," she replied laughing. "Our county is a regular fortress of orthodoxy. I will give you an example. After dinner, one Sunday evening, a guest was at the piano and he suddenly struck the first notes of an irresistible waltz. It was so irresistible that I held out my hand to my husband and

we began to dance. The younger people present followed our example, and for the next half-hour we were all whirling round, to the horror of various dowagers. I have no doubt that our transgression was thoroughly disapproved of in the servants' hall, and very much discussed. The following day my housekeeper, in great distress, informed me that my nurse's mother had come to fetch her daughter home, on account of the bad example for her at Ferncross. I must confess that I felt humiliated, and that I was thoroughly ashamed of having horrified these good people. I shall never do such a thing again. I am free to come to London in search of the devil, but I must not take him home to Ferncross."

"That is what the French would call our hypocrisy, is it not?" asked Lady Neville.

"Yes; because they know nothing of your habits and customs, nor yet of the English mind. I should do just as Lady Herbert does. I can quite understand that in England you must submit to certain restrictions. On the Continent you are free to do what your conscience allows you to do. Here in England, you must act according to the conscience of others, of the greater number. It is a case of tact and not of hypocrisy."

"Good," exclaimed Lord Kimble, with a pleased look; "that is something like justice."

"I am sure that we shall see some of our neighbours to-night, at the Savoy, breaking the Sabbath as we are doing," remarked Lady Herbert.

"At the Savoy!" I said.

"Yes; we are going there this evening," answered Mrs. Winthrop.

"I am sorry you are not going to the Carlton, as I am invited there and should have met you. These parade-dinners are quite an institution now, in London," I added.

"Parade-dinners?" repeated Mr. Gray.

"They give me that impression," I said.

"They are more or less parade-dinners."

"I am surprised you do not have them in Paris," said our hostess. "They are so amusing."

"The Ritz Hotel and the Elysée-Palace Hotel have done their best to bring them into fashion," I replied. "They have succeeded in getting together a certain cosmopolitan custom for them, among which are just a few French people, but always the same ones. Although you do not think it," I added, "we are more reserved and exclusive than you."

"Oh!" remarked Sir Edward, stopping short with a piece of sugar half-way between the bowl and his cup.

"Yes, it is quite true," I said. "Dinner with us is neither a show function nor a merely animal function. It is a repast, and we like to season it with conversation, with sallies of wit, with gaiety, and with a crowd of things not intended for the gallery."

"But for a private room at the restaurant, perhaps?" suggested Mr. Gray, wickedly.

"Yes. With us our smart society dines or takes supper a great deal at the restaurant, but always with a certain degree of privacy. The restaurant is very French, but the hotel is English. Our real aristocracy would consider it a come-down to exhibit itself in public. If we had a Court, our princes and grandees would not dine in the ordinary room as yours do."

"Oh, we are very different, there is no doubt about that," said Lord Neville; "and the worst of it is that we do not know each other yet."

"We have made a good stride towards meeting each other, though."

"Provided that the *entente* lasts," said Lord Kimble; "for with our wretched politics——"

"Oh, please, do not let us touch on politics," interrupted Mrs. Winthrop. "Let us have another rubber instead."

We accordingly played another rubber, and I left the bridge table, finally, thirty shillings richer than on my arrival. On leaving, Lord Kimble offered me a seat in his carriage, and deposited me safely at Claridge's Hotel.

The friends who had invited me to dinner were staying at the Carlton, and, as they were Americans who always like the best, their table was admirably placed. It was as though we

had a huge stage before us, with the actors and actresses dining at small tables. It was a most brilliant assembly. My hostess had been in London all the season and she knew many of the important people by sight, as she had frequently seen them dining at this hotel. In a respectful tone of voice, and with visible satisfaction, she told me their names. The idea of this American woman doing the honours of these dukes, earls, and marquises of the British Empire for my benefit seemed to me irresistibly droll. I am beginning to appreciate the salt of life, the salt contained in certain facts, and I can now laugh with the gods.

The grand lords and ladies, the parvenus and millionaires, had all put their "war paint" on for this parade in a restaurant. This English expression came to my mind and amused me, and I began to study the "war paint" of society people of the twentieth century as though I had never seen it before. The man's war paint is not very brilliant, but it seemed to me very manly, and by its soberness it is certainly very different from more primitive war paint. That of the women, on the contrary, is remarkably similar to the war paint of former days. There is still plenty of make-up, blackening of the eyebrows, red and white paint on the face, hair waved or frizzed, and false hair added. On the head, tiaras, aigrettes, feathers, and as ornaments, necklaces, earrings, bracelets, and more or less precious stones. Then, too, the bare shoulders, and the rest of the body richly arrayed in stuffs and silks of all shades. For the first time dresses cut away at the top and lengthened out at the bottom seemed grotesque to me. I wondered whether this piece of nudeness were not a memento of the past imposed upon us by ironical Nature. Then, when I thought of the centuries and of the amount of effort it had required to bring feminine adornment up to this degree of perfection, I felt a real sentiment of respect and admiration.

I noticed all that differentiated English and American society women. The figures of the English women are not strongly outlined, their throats have a Grecian roundness, they have sloping shoulders, their dresses hang in folds or are draped, they

have a somewhat original taste, a great deal of art and still more artifice, an innate distinction, rare but ideal beauty. The dresses of the American women are too perfect and they show up their pretty outline. There is more *chic* than elegance about them and fresh, brilliant beauty. There is the charm of experience about the English women, a natural charm about the Americans. It seems to me that, just as they are, these rival cousins stand an equal chance of success. In that Carlton dining-room they gave me an opportunity of making a comparative study of English and American flirtation. With the English woman, it is mild, tender, clever, and dangerous. With the American woman it is imperious, rough, and impertinent. In the attitude of the English woman towards man there is always something of an unconscious adoration, the adoration due to temperament. In the attitude of the American woman, there is only a very conscious self-adoration. At the next table to ours, one of them was making a handsome young Englishman feel the bit and the bridle. I saw him turn red with anger and vexation several times. These signs of rebellion appeared to excite the young woman's coquettish instincts, and she was certainly enjoying herself.

The nephew of my hosts, a young man of eighteen, suddenly asked:

"Why in the world do English women make eyes as they do? American women do not."

"And you like that better?" I asked, laughing.

"Yes; it is more open and above board, better sport," he replied.

I was delighted at this remark, as it corroborated my own observations.

"What do you think of this exhibition?" asked Charley Ford, his eyes alight with youthful curiosity.

"I think it is very interesting," I replied, "and your countrywomen figure well here."

"Yes," he answered, "they certainly do. Just look at Lady M——," he continued, "she looks a real peeress!"

"You know a great deal about it!" exclaimed my friend.

"A Chicago peeress! No family and no traditions! That is very evident, too."

Traditions is the latest word launched by American women.

"After all," added Mrs. Ford, with a very wise look, "the things that cannot be bought are the only things worth having."

"Provided that people already have all that can be bought," added her husband, humoristically.

The various groups at the tables did not appear to be having any conversation. They exchanged remarks and they looked at the people and beamed more or less, according to the success they were having. Not a single word reached me, but I could read some scraps of the romances that were going on all around me. Ah, there was some "copy" there! In that every-day dining-room an intense struggle was going on between odours and perfumes; between the sparkle of various gems; between colours, beauty, and ugliness; between the representatives of two rival nations; between pride of birth and pride of money; between a multitude of different, over-excited vanities. It was a regular battlefield, and, although the wounded and the dead were not visible, they were there, too.

After thinking things well over, I fancy that I have discovered how this fashion of dining at the hotel has taken root in England.

As Queen Victoria could only be considered as a queen *in partibus*, the best society was like a company of actors with neither a manager nor any work. As there was no Court for them, they gradually took advantage of the stage offered them by certain cosmopolitan hotels. They exhibited their jewellery, their dresses, their titles, and entered the lists, in matters of elegance, with their American cousins. Their taste for all this gradually increased. The women became accustomed to the flattering adjectives of the various chroniclers and could not do without them later on. Royal Highnesses and great lords were flattered by the respectful silence caused by their arrival. They were pleased to hear their names whispered from lip to lip, and, if anyone had had exceptionally good hearing, the purring of their vanity might have been

detected through their high, stiff collars. All this is not at all surprising and we should have felt the same pleasure in their place. It seems unjust to attribute faults to one special person, class, or nation, which are simply human faults.

The best English society, therefore, became a living advertisement for hotel keepers, and restaurant parades have become an institution. I wonder whether they do not serve Nature's plans. They not only take place in London, but in Rome, of all places, and they are given chiefly for American women. A neutral ground was necessary for the meeting of the Old World and the New World, and the gods chose that of the hotel. At first, one can scarcely imagine what American women had to gain by watching the more or less authentic scions of the old races of Europe, and by contemplating the more or less hereditary jewellery. They probably receive the necessary impressions though, and they give others in exchange. What is all this to produce? That we do not know, and God alone knows. In the meantime, this profane Sunday has given me a whole multitude of fresh ideas, of ideas that are, perhaps, foolish. At any rate, I can scarcely think it has been time lost, as it supplied me with an endless number of things to observe.

. . . . . .

An agreeable surprise awaited me this morning. On returning from my walk, I found Edith Baring at the hotel.

"And you never let me know you were coming!" I exclaimed. "Are you not going to stay here?"

"I am only passing through London this time," she answered. "I am on my way to Wimbledon to arrange about the things to be sent to Loftshall, to buy Dick, and take him with the rest of the menagerie."

"I am delighted for his sake," I said.

"You can rejoice for my sake, too. I would rather have him than the most valuable jewellery. And I can keep all the promises I made him now."

"You seem to consider him as a sort of fetish."

My friend's lips contracted as I said this, and I felt sure that I had unconsciously touched a weak spot.

"A fetish—yes, you are right," she said, with a nervous smile.

We lunched together, and talked about everything. I did not fail to ask her about the arrival at Loftshall.

"We were very much touched by it all, as you can imagine," she said. "The servants were awaiting us in the hall, and the housekeeper introduced them to us. We then went at once to my uncle's room. He was already in the coffin, and his face had a beautiful, peaceful expression. We could do nothing but pray for him. The funeral took place the following day, and the will was read afterwards. As I wrote to you, all that does not belong to the Trust is to be divided between Jack and me. There are some houses in the City, so I shall be much richer than I expected."

"That is by no means disagreeable."

"No; but to tell the truth, we are still a trifle dazed by this great change."

"Your mother must be happy?"

"I should just think she is. She is slowly taking possession of the family nest. She wanders along the corridors, visits first one room and then another, opens the wardrobes and the cupboards, examines the family papers. She is evidently very much affected by all the old memories. She comes back to us sometimes with red eyes and trembling hands. Dear mother! In her high-back chair, at the head of the table, where so many of the Wilkes family have presided, she looks so dignified that Rodney calls her the 'Squiress.' We are longing for you to see her in her proper setting."

"And what about you? Tell me about your impressions as an heiress."

"My impressions as an heiress? Oh, well, in the first place I am thankful to give up housekeeping. Mother will now have a housekeeper instead of me; and then, above everything else," added Edith, in a lower voice, "I am glad that I shall not to have mend my stockings."

"Is that all?" I asked, laughing heartily.

"No, I am thoroughly enjoying the country, the open space, the fresh air, and not being shut up in a villa, as we were at Wimbledon. Oh, how all the villas there got on my nerves!"

"Have you had any riding?"

"Not yet, although there are eight fine horses in the stables. I have been waiting for Dick, as I want to have my first ride on his back."

"Well, for a person who has a horror of sentiment——"

"Yes, it is sentiment, perhaps," she said, in a rather mocking tone, and colouring slightly. "To tell the truth," she added brusquely, "I expected to feel more happiness about it than I have done. At any rate, I shall have a certain satisfaction and there will be plenty for me to do at Loftshall. I shall have to introduce modern comfort, have tennis courts laid out, and some of the cottages rebuilt. Oh, I shall have plenty to entertain myself with, and plenty to occupy me for some years to come."

"I hope there will be something more interesting than all that in your life. You will surely marry——"

A cloud came over Edith's face at these words.

"Marry?" she said. "No, that does not appear to be my lot in life. The first man who proposed to me died, the second was divorced," she added, with a slight colour and an attempt at a smile. "You said once that Providence needed old maids and bachelors for all kinds of work. Why should I not be one of these old maids?"

"Because you have not the physique. I do not see you in that rôle at all."

"But I already have the rôle. Do you think I play my part badly?"

"Very badly."

"Thanks. I will do better in the future. Joking aside, I can see myself very well as the 'Aunt Cecilia' of Rodney's and Ruby's children. I can also see myself as one of those amusing Englishwomen who trot round the globe. I shall have some

fine travelling. I shall go to India, China, and Japan, and I shall send post-cards to my friends."

She then added ironically: "If, with all that, I could not do without happiness, I should have less character than I thought."

"But why in the world should you do without happiness?"

"I have no idea. It seems to me that it is rather unjust; but there evidently is not enough for everyone."

"You have an English proverb, though, that declares every dog has its day."

"Well, I have not come to mine yet."

"All the more reason that you should have it."

"A miracle would be necessary."

"Well, there are such things as miracles. A good Catholic like you ought to have no doubts, especially at a time when God is overwhelming you with prosperity."

"Yes, I certainly am an ungrateful creature," said Edith, with a pathetic smile.

"And what about Rodney?" I asked, by way of turning the conversation in another direction.

"He is revelling in the joy caused by the thought of being able to marry soon. He misses you very much. The other evening he remarked to me: 'I wish Pierre de Coulevain were here, so that we could talk.' Very flattering to me, was it not, considering that I had been talking to him for an hour!"

"Do not be jealous, my dear girl," I said. "I have the melancholy privilege of talking life, whilst you live it."

"I live it so little!"

"When is your brother coming to London?"

"When I come. Ruby is invited to Mrs. Nerwind's. We have cabled to Jack, so that he must now be on the way. You will find yourself in the midst of the whole family," added my friend, with an affectionate glance at me.

After luncheon, she went to look at the various rooms and engaged a little drawing-room, a bedroom, and bathroom.

"Rather extravagant, is it not?" she said, as we were going downstairs again.

"No," I replied. "One must learn to spend. There are people who, even when they are rich, go on economising, thanks to their former habits."

"Oh, I shall soon learn to spend. As the daughter of my father, I must have some astounding tendencies that way."

We had now reached the hall, and Edith prepared to start. I went with her to Charing Cross and, on my way back, I thought over our conversation. She evidently has some sorrow that cannot be overcome by money. Irritated herself by it, she had betrayed herself unconsciously, for I now felt sure that the "place was taken" with her. Women with empty hearts do not have such luminous eyes. I wonder who this someone is? I feel sure that I shall know, for it cannot be for no reason that we have learnt to know each other, and that we have become so intimate at the hotel. Then, too, we are going to spend some time together at Claridge's Hotel. How strange that she and I should stay at Claridge's together!

London.

Every nation seems to me like a plant, of which the lower class is the root, the middle class the stem, and the upper class the flower. In the root the germ of its defects and of its qualities is found, the rough outline of its character.

In England, it is the lower class that I specially love. The people of this class are strong, patient, and kind, very virile and admirably prepared for the work of pioneers. Their intelligence is neither keen nor brilliant, but sturdy, practical, and capable of organising. Great forces are more easy to discipline than lesser ones. The people of the lower classes obey laws and rules with all the more docility because they are not obliged to obey. Two currents moderate their violent and primitive instincts. The first is the influence of the upper classes, the contact with gentlemen and ladies. The second is their own spirituality; for they have more spirituality than ideality. The Bible is an accumulator of great power, a sort of viaticum for these people, and a marvellous stay. They have, as yet, neither taste nor the artistic sense, but they possess, in a

very high degree, comprehension of justice, of liberty, and pride of individuality. This is the great obstacle to the progress of socialism with them. For their country they have unlimited ambition, and no effort and no sacrifice would cost them too much in order to keep that in the foreground. They must have, at their head, the man who is the best born and of the highest rank. They would not be at all content to be represented by a man of the middle class.

I once heard a speech which was very characteristic in this respect. An Englishwoman, who had seen Queen Victoria's funeral, gave me a description of the procession.

"The Queen was very short," she said, "and as she was placed on the gun carriage she appeared to be very small indeed. The sight of that coffin, nearly as wide as it was long, gave me a pang. I felt humiliated to think that that was the Queen of England."

This pride is at the bottom of English patriotism, and it is what makes it so forcible.

For the people, as indeed for the whole nation, the King incarnates the idea of country in the same way as the Union Jack, hence the people's respect and loyalism. They have also, I fancy, the feeling that the King belongs to them individually, that he does the business of the country and consequently the business of the people. The filial sentiment they had for Queen Victoria was the most touching thing to see. Living quietly as she did, they were deprived of the pleasure of seeing her, of the shows in which they delight, and of the various fêtes which would have been profitable commercially. The majority of the people did not complain. They considered that she was free to do as she liked, and there was a certain grandeur in such justice. She was not generous, and she thought of her own family before thinking of the nation; but she was not blamed for this. When any accident happened in any industry she sent the usual message of condolence, and those who received it were satisfied. The Queen represented Mother England, and as such people reverenced her. They were very grateful to her for being a virtuous woman, little

realising how difficult it would have been for her to be anything else.

On the occasion of King George's wedding, I happened to be in the crowd facing Buckingham Palace. The old Queen was seated on the balcony to the right. She had a white lace veil on her head, and she looked very noble and dignified with her wide ribbon decoration. Standing near her was the late King very manly looking and genial, and then came the young married couple, both of them very timid. Down below the people saluted these three royal generations with prolonged hurrahs, and that peculiar movement of the arms with which they express their enthusiasm—a movement suggestive of the waving of a flag. Just near me a tall man who looked like a workman, was gazing at his sovereign with eyes full of affection.

"The dear old woman!" he remarked. "I've sweated for her more than once. They won't let her show herself, because they think we are dangerous. That's all stuff and nonsense, for no one would touch a hair of her head."

The tears came into my eyes at these words, and I wished they could reach the ears of the Queen. She would certainly have been surprised, as she no longer came into contact much with her people. I saw that, and realised it during the Jubilee festivities. I was at a window on the first floor of the house, when, during a stop in the procession, the Queen's carriage drew up, just opposite us. She was wearing a decent bonnet (which was not an every-day event) and a black silk cape trimmed with white guipure. I gazed with eager curiosity at this woman who could say: "My subjects, my army, my fleet." She was making her triumphal journey in that dreamy state which prevents us, at certain moments, from feeling the reality too keenly. It was her apotheosis and yet, in the midst of this strong current of popular love, there was not a single ray of joy or of pride on her face, not a ray of sympathetic feeling, nothing but an expression of nervous timidity. The Queen of England and the Empress of India was, perhaps, a timid woman, and that would explain her way of living. She looked at this

crowd, to which she was no longer accustomed, with an astonished and somewhat shrinking expression which quite justified the speech of my neighbour in front of Buckingham Palace. The following day, at Kensington, she was either more reassured or she felt more at home, for she smiled in a motherly way at the thousands of children who formed two lines along the road she went. She seemed to me then to be more in communion with her people, and I rejoiced for her and for them. The only country in which it is good to be a Queen or a horse is England, and when I say this, I believe I am paying a tribute to its loyalty and its humaneness.

The lower classes love processions, royal pomp and ceremony, and the display of luxury in any form. Poor people, for instance, are flattered by the visits of well-dressed people. They have not much respect for those whom they do not look upon as gentlemen and ladies, and their intuition in this respect is very sure. A great lady told me once that she used to put on her simplest dresses to visit her protégés, but that one day she overheard a woman say to her neighbour, in a disappointed and disdainful tone: "Is that all she has to show us?" From that day forth, she has always dressed for the East End. The people she visits touch the silk of her dress in a knowing way, stroke her fur, and watch her get into her carriage, without the least envy or bitterness. Their snobbishness is satisfied, for this exists even amongst the very poor—this weakness out of which Nature, in this country, obtains such force.

There is a certain romantic tendency, too, among them, and a great need of emotion. Thousands of brains are occupied in supplying them with artificial emotion and they devour an alarming quantity of penny novels. These are their own special accumulators. The intellectual food of this class is poor but clean. It is as though these people knew instinctively that marriage and birth were only sources of suffering to them, for they scarcely commemorate them at all. On the other hand, nothing is spared for their funerals. Among the lower classes the lives of children are insured. When one dies, the parents receive a small sum, which they frequently spend in treating

their friends and acquaintances. Every family on such occasions endeavours to outdo its neighbours. Phil May, in one of his sketches, showed up this vanity, admirably. It is more and more developed in the higher classes of society. He shows us two poor women with haggard faces, wearing shawls put on in pointed fashion and dragging on the ground. They are wearing bonnets with feathers and gloves. The one has evidently just returned from a funeral. "It was a very poor set-out," she says. "At the funerals of both my husbands I gave seed-cake, and we had nothing there but bread and butter."

What a trait of human nature there is in this!

This insurance of children's lives is a dangerous temptation. Attempts have been made to protect them, but the insurance agents seem to make money by these policies all the same.

I saw the London people during the triumph of Mafeking, that victory which took place after the fear of defeat. The intoxication was wild and brutal in the extreme, beyond all that could be imagined. I saw London again, at the time of the postponement of the coronation of King Edward VII. Its dignity and loyalty were admirable, although the event was such a blow to public pride and interests.

In England, the man of the people accomplishes his task without any enthusiasm, but with a dogged perseverance. The consciousness of his strength and a generous instinct prompt him to aid the weak and no one is more ready to give a helping hand. He emigrates bravely, and goes out to distant countries to found colonies, to build new cities, and to plant the Union Jack in the most remote parts of the world. The worth of Tommy Atkins and of Jack Tar is known throughout the universe.

A great number of men are drunken brutes who sink to the gutter, who drag their families there with them, and who will die there. There are more of these human wastrels in England than anywhere else. I have often stopped in front of these sleeping vagabonds, great fellows of six feet high, with warm, swarthy complexions and low foreheads. This slumber of the van-

quished revealed to me moral weakness and powerful animality. Some tones of light-coloured skin were to be seen under the dirt and an expression of half childlike kindliness was visible through their degradation. When I look at such men my heart is always full of tenderness and pity. The hooligan terrifies me less than the French *apache*. In the former there is something of the lion, and in the latter something of the tiger.

In his love affairs, the man of the people has a great deal of primitive brutality. He is the pitiless male and is, perhaps, not aware of his own brutality. He has real affection for his wife, nevertheless, and when anyone speaks to him of his youngsters his face softens and a broad smile betrays his pride and satisfaction. I have often tried the experiment.

He looks upon woman as a very inferior being. She is the eternal subject of his jokes. There are fewer crimes due to passion than in France, and I fancy that there are not so many men living on the proceeds of the woman's immorality.

In the Unknown Isle the man of the people smokes a pipe, drinks gin, whiskey, and beer, and all this contributes to make him heavy and solemn. He is more inclined to deliberate and does not reply to anything in a hare-brained way. Artifice is almost foreign to his character. He thinks it is only good for a woman. He likes to go straight to the bottom of things. His natural causticity and his humoristic vein amuse me immensely. His philosophy, made up of common sense and irony, reminds one of that of Shakespeare, or to be just, that of Shakespeare comes in a direct line from him.

On arriving in London, three days before the Coronation was to take place, I asked my porter whether it were true that the King was ill.

"Kings and poor people have no time to be ill," he replied, abruptly, throwing my trunk on to the barrow.

I was struck by this bringing together of the two ranks, and by the unconscious philosophy which had inspired it. The English people have retained many primitive tastes. The organisers of the Salvation Army gave proof of a profound knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon soul, or else they were divinely

inspired when they made use of tambourines, trumpets, and music of all kinds for leading the people on to better things. These tambourines and trumpets have, perhaps, awakened in them the memory of tom-toms, which, thanks to their atavism, was dormant within them. The people answered to the call of these instruments and a very considerable, necessary, and beneficent work has been created. The success of such means seems to me very characteristic, and could only have such results on this side of the Channel. Everywhere else ridicule would have promptly slain this military sect.

In England, the woman of the lower class is inferior to the French woman. Her life is much sadder. Her work is simply to supply number. When one sees her, haggard-looking and faded, at her wash-tub, surrounded by her little brood, one can no longer think of reproaching her for letting her husband go to work badly fed and badly clothed. Many of these women are brave creatures, and one wonders how, with only two hands, they get through so much work. They have a right to the first place in the History of Human Martyrs.

The English crowd is very much mixed and crossed, so that the Anglo-Saxon type is becoming more and more rare. Ugliness predominates, an ugliness that is often monkey-like—the nose and mouth betraying a great deal of animality. Here and there, however, one sees faces with pure features, of a perfect oval and a wonderful colouring, which seem to belong to a higher humanity.

The day before Coronation Day, from the windows of the Carlton, I saw streams of the "great unwashed" go by. For a long time I studied this living mass and I said again: "Yes, these people are strong, patient, and good."

In France, the people have an entirely different temperament. They are feminine to the very marrow. Their higher faculties are more developed, their character less formed. They are wanting in initiative and in perseverance, they are both malleable and indocile, and are rebellious to discipline as no other people are. Their strength is uneven, because it is in the nerves rather than in the muscles, and, like children, they can be lured by words.

They have more ideality than spirituality. The religious sentiment is lacking in them. Their light mind, incapable of concentration, could not mount towards God without the help of religion. When they have no religion, they live and die in coarse indifference. In politics, their judgment has been systematically warped. The Head of the State, whom they are supposed to nominate themselves, has no prestige for them. They scarcely even take their hats off as he passes. One day, near the Elysée, I overheard a workman say, as he watched the President coming out of the palace: "After all, he is only a *bourgeois*." The people will never associate this *bourgeois* with their country and their flag. There is nothing more to applaud, nothing to excite enthusiasm, and so they keep their cheers now for foreign sovereigns. Did not Providence want to teach our people, in this way, to do without the splendour of processions, of royal pomp, of primitive accessories, in order to lead them to applaud the works and deeds of man, instead of the man himself? Is this not a lesson that they are learning?

The English people try to mount, to copy those above them. With us the people are free from snobbishness. They want to bring the people of the classes above them down to their own level, and they cordially hate the *bourgeois*. During the military service the ordinary soldier revels in being able to treat the sons of good families familiarly. Someone reproached a radical ex-deputy, who had become a minister, with the way he let himself go. He replied that if he were different his electors would not be pleased. His coarse language and careless dress no doubt gave them an idea of fraternity. So much for their intelligence. As to the dignity of the country, neither the electors nor the elected think of that.

Individually, our man of the people is interesting and very curious to study. Whether superior or inferior to his English brother I cannot tell; but he is different, and very different. In the first place, he is more a smoker of cigarettes than of the pipe. His drinks are more varied and lighter, giving him a different kind of force and a different kind of intoxication.

He is a born loiterer, but his loitering often proves to be fertile. He works with less assiduity than the Britisher, but with more care and taste. We see him stand back and put his head on one side and then on the other, whilst judging his work, no matter how humble it may be, and this gesture reveals the artist within him.

He is, I believe, a better father and a better husband than the Englishman—at any rate, he is more agreeable in these two capacities. He puts a certain refinement into his love, and his affection often subdues his animality. He is capable of deep affection for his *gosses* and for his *bourgeoise*, as he calls his children and his wife. His *bourgeoise!* She is indeed an admirable creature. She always bears half, if not three-quarters, of the burden of life, and she protects the little brood and the home. Shrewd, valiant, and prudent, she exercises a very real influence over the decisions of her husband. He does not vote until he has "talked things over with her." She prides herself on turning her husband out well, on seeing him well dressed. The meals that she takes him to his place of work are most appetising. Thanks to her, there is no workman more comfortable than the French workman, and if it were not for alcoholism there would be none happier. With marvellous intuition she sometimes divines the vocation of one or other of her children, and, at the price of a hundred sacrifices, she puts him on the road to fortune, perhaps even to fame. Numbers of *bourgeois* are twice over the sons of their mother.

The woman of the people has certain delicacies of soul that the man does not possess, as I have frequently proved. I was once among the crowd on the terrace of the Tuileries, on a 14th of July. I was watching the Strasbourg statue being decorated on the Place de la Concorde.

"Not easy work," observed a workman just in front of me.

"No; but it does those young men good," said a woman standing by.

"Oh, yes; gymnastics are very good," answered her husband in an approving tone.

"Gymnastics!" replied his wife, disdainfully. "I meant that

it must do their hearts good to handle those flags and wreaths."

"You should have said what you meant, then."

The woman merely shrugged her shoulders, but the expression that she put into that gesture was undescribable. I was inwardly delighted at having the opportunity of seeing what makes the weakness of the strong sex and the force of the weaker sex.

The wife and daughter of our working class are great assets in our country, and, to its shame, the laws do not protect them sufficiently.

Foreigners are unanimous in their admiration of the French crowd, and it certainly is refined, elegant, courteous, and gay. When one mingles with it for a few minutes, one is affected magnetically by its excessive nervosity. From no other crowd does so much electricity emanate. The English crowds have fists. The French crowd has claws, and one feels that these claws would be used on the slightest provocation. I cannot say that our working class is strong, patient, and good; but I will say that it is wonderful.

All classes of society produce refuse and dregs. In France, the dregs of the first strata are, perhaps, less thick than those of the same strata in England. They contain more femininity, more subtle poisons, but also valuable ferments. When they have been worked afresh by divine agents, I am sure that they will both give various resultants.

London.

It is certainly in the middle class, in the stem of the nation-plant, that the maximum of forces is found. In England and in France, from the nodes of this stem, spring three classes of individuals: the lower middle class, the middle class, and the upper middle class.

In the lower middle class the wife does not, as a rule, help her husband in his work. He must *maintain* her, according to Anglo-Saxon principles. If he cannot do this, she feels that she is humiliated. The worst of it is she is a very bad housekeeper.

She is utterly ignorant of that art in which the Frenchwoman is past mistress, namely, to do much with little. Growth is slower with our neighbours than with us. In this class, the higher faculties are in the most embryonic stage. Snobbishness, on the contrary, is getting more and more marked. People in this class are beginning to stand on tip-toes in order to see those above them, and copy them. Following the example they thus see, a certain discipline of life is observed and an attempt is made to do the correct thing; such, for instance, as to make some change in dress for the evening meal, to go away for week-ends, and to invite their friends to the house. This class, too, is beginning to feel the need of change of air. It belongs to a special sect in religion and takes pride in attending the church or chapel thereof. The Sabbath day is strictly observed, and the husband pompously attends divine worship, dressed in a black coat, and wearing a tall hat, whilst the wife puts on her best dress. Religion and politics are the two principal subjects of conversation outside business. In short, the people of this class are very simple, very ignorant, and very virtuous.

The French lower middle class has not the same characteristics. It is more brilliant, more active, and more prosperous. The woman is the soul of it. In this class, she is truly the partner of the man, and she is often superior to him. In the provinces, whilst the husband is playing cards or sipping his absinthe, she is attending to business, without any detriment to her household. She works eagerly for the sake of filling the stocking, in which her daughters are to find their wedding dowry, her sons a nest egg, and often wealth, for in many cases she does actually fill the stocking.

On this step of the social ladder, we stand first as regards instruction. The children, who are urged on pitilessly with their studies, are more advanced than English children, more developed intellectually, but as they are deprived of athletic sports, they are less vigorous and less hardy.

People in this class in France do not trouble much about social conventions. The Frenchman likes to be comfortably

well-off, so that he need not be fettered in any way, so that he may live in his shirtsleeves, as it were. The Englishman of the same social rank appreciates a little money, so that he may put on a black coat and appear to be a gentleman.

The Frenchman of the lower middle class has no religious sentiment. He leaves church to his wife, if indeed he does not object to her attending it. On the other hand, he is very keen about politics and all the more so as he is aware that he has become an important factor in them.

With its industry and its indefatigable work, this class enriches France. It produces, too, more intellectual values than the corresponding English class. Its homes are kept warm by affection and enlivened by natural wit and a great exuberance of life. It is here that the most virtue and real happiness exist in France.

The keystone of England, as well as of France, is the middle class. The forces which come from the people and from the lower middle class, together with a fixed ambition, accomplish marvels. Each of the two nations is making an effort and working eagerly. They both have their eyes fixed on the reward at the top of the greasy pole. The Britishers mount it with a slower but more regular movement than we do. In important material work they surpass us; in intellectual work we are superior to them. In England, the mentality of this class is simple, strong, admirably disciplined, not much cultured, full of prejudices, and philistine and *bourgeois* to a supreme degree. The people of this class are very religious, highly respectable, and extremely snobbish. The younger generation has, fortunately, an existence of its own at present, and throws some brilliancy over this mediocrity. Between the generation of the parents and children an enormous gulf has been made. The latter, by an unexpected bound, have escaped from a whole crowd of tiresome and out-of-date conventionalities.

In the middle class, in France, there is more of the higher life, more intuition, less discipline, and less individual initiative. Forces are not mustered as well as in England. The French middle class does not understand economising time, but it knows

how to economise money. The same narrowness of ideas is to be found as in England, and the same Puritanism. In France, the middle class is not snobbish, but ridiculously exclusive. On both sides of the Channel, there is more religion and morality in this class than in the others.

We are now at the extremity of the stem, the upper middle class. The sap has risen and mentalities have developed. Ambition and emulation have become more ardent and the struggle more severe. All have begun to want comfort, luxury, beauty. Political and worldly passions, a crowd of fresh elements, have come into play. For the sake of arriving more quickly at the goal, everyone has got rid of a quantity of scruples and sentiments, and virtue is at a discount.

In England, effort is more particularly made in the direction of money and social position. In France, there are more minds occupied with the ideal. Our neighbours make more material wealth and we more artistic wealth; we make more light, gaiety, and perhaps more happiness, too.

London.

The flower! We have now arrived at that. The mounting of the sap has been very difficult to follow, even superficially. I have felt, all the time, without seeing the millionth part of it, the immensity of the labour of Nature and of man. This labour must necessarily end in the creation of an *élite*. All these forces, put into activity, must surely produce beings more refined, richer clothing, more luxurious abodes. The great accumulators of art and thought must have places worthy of them; the improved harmony must surely be heard and understood.

This human flower, composed of what in England is termed "the upper ten thousand," is neither idle nor favourised. It has to restore, to its stem and its root, the juices that it has received. It is subject to maladies, it has blemishes, its calyx contains more poisons and sorrows than anyone would imagine.

This flower, which represents society, seems to me to be strangely variegated. It has petals of a rich, sombre colour—

the old aristocracy, the old middle-class provincial aristocracy; then it has startling petals, shaded in an extraordinary way—"Smart Society" in England and the new aristocracy in France. These shades are the effects of the epoch of transition through which we are now passing.

In England, the transition is marked by the marriage of the aristocracy with the upper middle class—a forced marriage, certainly—and by the American invasion.

Badly cultivated estates have, year by year, yielded less and less. The necessaries of life have considerably increased, and some of the English aristocrats have found themselves face to face with ruin. Some of them have been obliged to sell their country houses and estates to owners of freshly acquired wealth; others, more shrewd, have asked to be taken in tow by financiers and business men. Their request has been granted, but not gratuitously. The business men have given the impoverished *grands seigneurs* an interest in their own speculations, and have helped them to get rich. In return for this they have borrowed the prestige of the aristocrats, put their names down as Members of their Committees, and have bound them morally and materially to their own fortune. Through them they themselves have managed to get titles and to penetrate into Society. All this has been like a certain French song:

Donne moi de quoi que t'as,
T'auras de quoi que j'ai.

Then, too, dukes and lords have married the daughters of bankers and of manufacturers. Men of the middle class have entered the House of Lords, dynasties of baronets have been created, red and blue blood have mingled, and money, which is more powerful in England than in any other nation of Europe, has worked the fusion of the two rival races. The aristocracy has been saved, but obliged to receive and to invite those who have saved it, so that it now somewhat resembles a half-drowned man who is rescued, but condemned ever after to wear his life-belt. This is all rather ugly. The foreign elements, introduced by Nature into the English *élite*, have created a fresh ebullition

there and completed the disaggregation commenced a long time ago. Good society had continued travelling in the family coach and had never come into contact with the younger generations, the generations which took the train. Its prudery amused the whole world, its narrowness of ideas, its prejudice and its Puritanism saturated the atmosphere of all England with ugliness and dulness. From this very dulness sprang "Smart Society," just in the same way as mosquitoes come from stagnant water.

The emancipated daughter is now burning, with wild joy, all that her parents and ancestors had adored, and she has a decided taste for forbidden fruit, for the most severely forbidden kind of fruit. At present, everything is spoken of openly in England. The Divorce Court scandals are discussed in ordinary conversation as well as the smaller everyday scandals. And all such things are a hundred times more ugly and crude in English than in French.

Formerly the Englishwoman accepted maternity with resignation and dignity, if not with enthusiasm. At present she refuses to accept it. It is now the latest affectation for girls to speak contemptuously of love and marriage. It is to be hoped that this is only an affectation.

Formerly the observance of the Sabbath was a subject of self-glorification, to-day people boast of not observing it. In the place of cant, vice is vaunted, because vice has become "smart."

Modern society has a few curious feminine types: the turf woman, the athletic girl, and the bridge woman. The turf woman lives on race-courses, knows all the jockeys, all the horses, bets like a man, and would sell herself for a good tip. Her whole person, her clothes, and her language are suggestive of the stable.

The athletic girl disdains the simpler sports. She boxes, shoots, fences, and goes in for gymnastics of an exaggerated kind. It would seem as though her ideal were the dislocation of her limbs. She swings her arms in the street, by way of keeping in training; she crosses her legs in the drawing-room;

she sprinkles her conversation with slang, smokes, and has all the characteristics of a depraved collegian.

The bridge woman is a kind of névrosée who spends whole days and even nights with cards in her hands. She has a folding card-table which she takes about everywhere, even when travelling. She forgets the hours of meals and all engagements. There is nothing but the rubber for her in life. She not only has dressmaker's bills, but gambling debts. Certain cheque books would show how she pays them.

Those who study English society of our times will not be able to pass over the evils of bridge in silence. These evils are enormous and reveal an immoderate need of money and a great desire for it.

Most of the men in "Smart Society" look very much like tailors' models. They think of nothing else but to keep themselves in form and to capture dowries. The heiress is their big game. For this kind of hunting very great ladies frequently undertake to beat up the game, and are very well paid for their services. In any society, when poverty is on the man's side and wealth on the woman's side, very ugly things take place. The influence of these modern ways and customs is evident. The Englishwoman has lost much of that straightforwardness which was her particular charm. Her hair is rough, as though she has forgotten how to use the brush. Her clothes have an untidy look and are badly put on. All this is a striking contrast with the correctness of former days. I have never seen so many made-up faces, so much dyed and faded hair, so much false hair, imitation jewellery and lace—so much sham. After an excess of conventionality there is now an excess of independence. Each person acts according to his or her own ideas. Some people still cling to the past, holding on to it by an infinite number of small threads, which they have not dared to cut asunder, whilst others have severed all their cables. Social etiquette has become perfectly fantastic. In the same family, for instance, parents perhaps wear mourning for a relative, and their children consider themselves free to dispense with the obligation for themselves.

One is not yet free to dine as one likes, in a high or low-necked dress, in a morning coat or in swallow-tails. If such freedom should ever be allowed, England would be at the last extremity, and such is not yet the case. Good society has been driven to a secondary place, but it is still there. Without being aware of it, it is being worked upon by invisible forces, and it will gradually enter into the modern movement. In the meantime it serves as a counterpoise to the present. It is only fair to own, too, that under the influence of this new spirit the Unknown Isle has a more brilliant aspect, its atmosphere is less grey and heavy. Mother England will not admit this. She employs her clergymen, her writers, and her moralists to denounce the evil. Her patriotism and her snobbishness are wounded by it, for not only does she worship the Bible and money, she worships her aristocracy, also. At present when Mother England sees her children dancing the cake-walk she says: "How can English people do that?" Her regret is so sincere that I feel very much inclined to tell her not to be afraid as this is only a transition crisis. As the misfortunes of other people often help to console us about our own, I might add that Madame la France is undergoing the same phenomenon, and that the petals of her flower are just as crudely variegated.

In London, during the season, one feels that there is still an "English society." In Paris, one feels that there is no longer a "French society." Foreigners are the first to notice this and to deplore it. They would like to find *salons* where people talk, so that they might meet well-bred people and the feminine *élite* of our country. They have to content themselves with admiring the Frenchwoman through their lorgnettes at the Auteuil, Longchamps, and Chantilly races.

The Republic lacks women, and, what is worse, does not want them. No government has ever protected woman less, has done less in the way of encouraging her generous initiative, and has more deliberately tried to oust her from all public affairs. The Salic Law has been rigidly applied by the Republic. It only has the official wives, women who have been brought on to

the scene by the humoristic gods and who have had to play their rôles, on the spur of the moment, without any preparation. They have not proved as bad in these rôles as people say. They have all given proof of remarkable tact. They have kept quiet, at any rate, so that no blunders have been reported. I do not believe that the merit of this is merely due to the master of the ceremonies, but to the good sense and intelligence of the women. They have lived as long as a Presidency or Ministry has lasted, and they have then disappeared as though they had never existed.

As to the French aristocracy, half of it is still plunged in its hundred years' sleep. The other half has entered into the modern amalgamation and this amalgamation forms a sort of new aristocracy which is our "Smart Society."

Poor noblemen marry either wealthy daughters of the middle class, or Americans. These women, coming from classes which have worked their way up, are longing for grandeur, luxury, amusements. The poor noblemen who have never known anything but poverty have an insatiable need of spending. The petted son, who has been keeping a *demi-mondaine*, now marries a well-born girl, and wants to play at being a great lord. All this results in homes in which desire, passion, and vanity run rife, so that average virtue is easily overcome, and in such surroundings nothing more than average virtue can be expected. Nature does not work miracles. She is a slow weaver, and these new *grandes dames* are not yet ripe. This is scarcely to be wondered at. It is difficult at the *Concours Hippique* and at the races to distinguish them from the *demi-mondaines*. It appears that when one is intimate with them, it is still more difficult to distinguish them. There are mean instincts, due to atavism, within them that are constantly evident in circumstances where there should be generosity. They cannot talk and they read very little. They are not really interested either in art or artists. In their love affairs, in maternity, and in friendship they are very mediocre. On the other hand, they are elegant, gracious, and pretty, and we must be thankful to them for this. They were evidently created rather for

the symbolical cake-walk than for the minuet. Everyone must act according to his or her capacity.

The vulgarity which emanates from this *ensemble* of people and things is communicated by infiltrations to the intermediary strata, and we are losing more and more that good tone which was the characteristic of our country.

Just as in England, we have, side by side with these society people of the extreme type, high-minded and cultured men and women who act as living dykes and prevent a complete disaster.

Thanks to our literature and to the *demi-mondaines* who are seen at all our public gatherings, we now have a reputation which we are far from deserving. The morality of the Anglo-Saxon race is more austere, purer than the morality of the Latin race, but its immorality is infinitely worse. That is explained by the very force of its character, by the powerfulness of its good or evil instincts. In French morality there is more froth than substance, and in English immorality there is more substance than froth.

However this may be, the amalgamation of various classes, both with us and with our neighbours, does not fail to produce a great deal of scum, and of foul scum. It may be that French society will be reconstituted some day, but for this either great ladies or great middle-class women will be necessary. We had such women in our eighteenth century. Men alone can create a monarchy or a republic, but they cannot create a society. A Chinese proverb says that: "Nations are like fish, they begin to go bad from the head downwards." If this be so, England and France are in a very unsound state. Unsound they certainly are, but they both possess immense reserves of good forces, capable of asepticising them morally. The most efficacious of these forces is assuredly the humanitarian current. Wherever that is most active, there is more health, more power, and more greatness.

London.

The American invasion seems to me to be a very fine illustration of that movement of the weaver's shuttle, which I discern in everything.

Towards the seventeenth century, Providence, deeming that the English ant-hill was too crowded, drove away some swarms of individuals and guided them in the direction of America. When once there, they organised themselves afresh into a society, but with wider laws. They made roads, constructed bridges, and built cities on plans somewhat different from those of the mother country. Thanks to unfettered activity and to the fertility of a virgin soil, they rapidly amassed enormous wealth.

The Star of Liberty had attracted the fathers to the New World. The star of grandeur, of prestige and traditions brought their descendants back again to the Old World. The initial movement was given by the women. A good number among them set out with the fixed intention of winning for themselves certain distinctions which their democratic country could not offer them. They arrived with powerful weapons, namely, youth, beauty, money. Society's worm-eaten doors could not long resist the assault of these women, and when once the latter were inside those doors they did not go out again. They married the proprietors of the great empty alvearies, filled these with seed, and obtained, in return, titles and crowns, which were the baubles of which they had ever been dreaming.

The grandsons and great-grandsons of those men who had crossed the ocean in sailing-boats and later on on the decks of packet-boats, started for the mother isle on princely yachts, and arrived there as silver, steel, or petroleum "kings," millionaires, and multi-millionaires.

The contrast between this going away and the return seems to me marvellous. Mother England does not look upon it with the same philosophy. She suffers when she sees American women occupying the old homes and bearing the historic names which ought to have fallen to the lot of her own daughters. She bears American women a grudge for destroying the integrity of her race, the purity of her language. She holds them responsible for the vulgarity which distresses her eyes and ears. She is above all humiliated to see Yankees influencing the City markets and holding in check England's commercial

power. She cannot forgive those States which are her own issue, and which have, nevertheless, shaken off her yoke.

On seeing English and American women together, one is surprised at the change that transplantation and mixed marriages can produce in a comparatively short time in individuals of the same race. These Anglo-Saxon half-sisters do not care much for each other and they understand each other still less. The elder sister, unconsciously perhaps, envies the younger one her *chic*, her brilliant beauty, her dainty hands and feet, her independence, and, above all, her dollars. The younger sister envies the elder one her distinction, her parchments, and her traditions. The English woman declares that the American woman is superficial, that she has no soul. The American woman jeers at the English woman's prejudices, at her conjugal submission, her taste, her affectations. The sharp tone and the brusqueness of the American woman irritate the English woman, and the former's nasal voice gives the latter gooseflesh. In spite of this curious antipathy they are destined to have considerable influence over each other.

The American woman in England has success, both as a woman and as heiress. She entered Society like a whirlwind and took it, so to speak, by surprise, for her moment had come. What a trump card it is to arrive at the right moment! The Englishman soon fell under the charm of the American woman's beauty and elegance. She generally amuses him by her frank speech and her extraordinary theories. Her first care is to teach him that Adam was created solely to love and serve Eve. He had always believed just the contrary. She demands his homage and his attentions, she tyrannises over him mercilessly, and holds the sugar-plum high above his head. He is quite willing to agree that the treatment is good for him. This rough American flirtation gives him the sensation of struggle and is an agreeable change after the tender flirtation he has hitherto known. From the day that the American woman puts her head into the conjugal noose, though, he tightens it after the fashion of the Old World and once more becomes lord and master. Nothing is left for the captive but

to submit or to divorce. When once she has placed on her head the tiara of a peeress, she would not give it up again, even though it should become a tiara of thorns. She would never resign herself to give up her fine, historical name and become once more Mrs. Smith, Davis, or Jones.

Between Anglo-Saxon husbands and wives, I have observed the same misunderstanding as in the Latin-American marriages. With the latter the difficulties are, perhaps, not so painful, as the Latin is less brutal in his selfishness.

When once she is married, the American woman makes the most touching efforts to assimilate and even to anglicise herself. Even against her own private taste she will either pile on false hair or adopt a severe style of hair-dressing. She will adopt the Grecian knot, wear extraordinary dresses, or overload her hats with feathers. Some of these women attempt to imitate the British demeanour, accent, and affectations. Their faces then have a peculiar, strained expression, which is the effect of the effort of assimilation they are almost unconsciously making. In town, the American woman has the advantage of the English woman, but in the country the English woman is distinctly superior. The American woman has not yet learnt how to dress for outdoor life. When she is out walking with her husband, whether he be a squire or a lord, it is easy to see that she will never be his comrade. She has not sport and horse in the blood like all the well-born daughters of John Bull, and on this account the American woman seems *bourgeois* to the English woman. In her rôle as hostess in the English ancestral home, the American woman is charming, delicious, but not *grande dame*. With her inferiors, her servants, her tenants, she is either too generous or too mean, too familiar or too haughty. She does not understand them and they will never look upon her as anything but a foreigner. During a visit at the house of one of these women, I witnessed a very characteristic little scene. I went out with my hostess, Mrs. A—P—, one morning, to visit an old man, crippled with rheumatism, who lived a few hundred yards away from her house. He was one of her favourite protégés, the father of one of her house-

maids. She took him a little basket filled with new-laid eggs, grapes, and tea, and with some beautiful roses on the top.

She spoke to him very charmingly, asked after his health with an expression of interest that was either quite sincere or very well feigned, gave him news of his daughter, and then spoke of the weather. She asked whether she could do anything for him.

"Thank you, my lady," he replied. "If you would read me a few verses of the Bible, I should be glad, as that always helps me."

An expression of comic terror came to my friend's face, and she glanced at me with a distressed look.

"Oh, yes, certainly," she answered, taking up the Bible to which the old man pointed on the window-ledge. She began to turn the leaves nervously.

"What chapter should you like best?" she asked, at length.

"The third chapter of St. Mark, please," replied the good man promptly. He then took the pipe out of his mouth and prepared to listen religiously.

Mrs. A— P— searched for the chapter indicated in a way which betrayed her lack of familiarity with the Gospels and, as soon as she had found it, commenced reading.

As a novelist I was interested in the picture before me. It was a ground-floor room with a paper covered with a floral design. The old walnut furniture, consisting of a bed, a chest of drawers, and a table, shone brightly. There were a few straw chairs. On the mantelshelf were a few poor little ornaments, lithographed portraits of the King and Queen and a faded one of Queen Victoria. A gun, gamebag, and fishing-tackle hung against the wall and there was a little shelf with about a dozen books. The old man was seated in the arm-chair, his arm bound up in cotton wool. Opposite him, on a low seat, was this elegant woman, wearing an embroidered white linen dress and a hat which was a masterpiece of millinery, reading the Bible. The window was open, framed with climbing plants and bright with geraniums. The sunshine lighted up the gold of the reader's hair, and the divine words which

fell from her lips mingled with the buzzing of the bees and insects and the ticking of a large clock. The whole scene was charming.

Mrs. A— P— did not read in that chanting tone which the English usually adopt for the Scriptures. She spoke in her natural, society way with a slightly nasal accent, and I must own without much religious fervour. This third chapter of St. Mark tells us of the miracle by which Jesus healed the man's withered hand. I, therefore, understood the hope which it contained for this poor cripple. He listened eagerly, but with an evident strain to catch the words. I noticed a gleam of mockery in his small eyes and a fleeting smile on his lips, and I was very much astonished. When the chapter was finished he thanked my friend.

"The Bible does not seem to me just the same in American," he remarked in a condescending tone; "but it is beautiful, very beautiful all the same."

These unconsciously cruel words brought a blush to Mrs. P—'s face, and I knew how mortified she felt.

"The wretch!" she exclaimed, as soon as we were outside the cottage. "And so I read the Bible in American. That is rather too strong!"

It was quite true, alas! and what was also true was the fact that it was American she spoke in her English home.

In spite of all this, Uncle Sam's daughters are gaining ground daily. They are everywhere; at Court, in town, in the country. Their influence is becoming more and more obvious. Numbers of their phrases are now used in everyday conversation. They have brought about the increase of luxury and expenditure and have considerably accelerated the movement of the social whirlpool. Their impress can be discerned on a crowd of things. The aspect of London within the last two years has been greatly Americanised, and it is a thousand pities. A handful of pretty millionaire women has sufficed to affect Old England. This is one of those traits of humour, so frequent in the history of nations and of individuals, which makes the idea of Providence so living for me.

London.

I have had my week-end like an Englishwoman. On Saturday morning my trunk and I were sent, for the second time, from Euston Station to Staffordshire. It has frequently happened to me to be sent, in this way, two or three consecutive years, not to the same house or place, but to the same neighbourhood.

Some very congenial people, whom I had met at Aix-les-Bains, invited me to spend a fortnight with them. I was only able to go there for a week-end. They insisted on my staying until Tuesday, and I have just returned to Claridge's Hotel.

Their house, modestly styled "The Lodge," is about three miles from the manufacturing town of D—, but the undulating country completely hides this town from view. "The Lodge" is a very old house and the greatest care is taken to preserve its ancient aspect. It is surrounded by a magnificent park and enlivened with the most luxurious profusion of flowers. My host belongs to the upper middle class. His wife, Lady Hilda Redcliff, was the daughter of an impoverished nobleman. They have two sons at Cambridge and they spend the winter always in Rome or Florence. Italy is their second home, and, with English people, this fact betokens a special mentality.

Lady Hilda is a very charming and superior woman, with a tinge of æstheticism drawn, no doubt, from the Ruskin and Burne-Jones school.

All the rooms at "The Lodge" were occupied by guests and I happened to find myself among a very pleasant set of people. Croquet and tennis were the order of the day for the younger members of the party. There were interesting walks and drives in the neighbourhood, and we spent a great deal of time under the century-old trees of the park, had tea out of doors among the flowers, and played bridge, of course.

The complete restfulness was delightful, and it certainly must be agreeable to be in a position to offer this change to one's fellow-creatures. A literary man and a very refined and clever clergyman interested and entertained me more, perhaps, than the other guests. They both had that gentle manner, relieved

by a strongly humoristic vein, which I have frequently found in the intellectual Englishman. Ever since John Bull and Madame la France have made advances to each other I have felt that there is an increase of sympathy and of interest for my country in England. In return for a compliment on French prosperity, I expressed my admiration of the various institutions due to private initiative which I had seen in England. Thereupon Mr. Redcliff suggested to his wife that she should take me to see an Eye Hospital which had been founded by private subscription in the neighbourhood, as it appears that, thanks to the iron-works and furnaces, diseases of the eyes are very frequent there.

Lady Hilda took me there to tea yesterday. The very idea of going to a hospital to tea shows how very differently such establishments are organised in England and in France.

The red brick house, covered with climbing plants and bordered with bright flowers, looks like a private dwelling. Inside there are wide corridors and dormitories with high windows, provided with everything necessary for regulating the light. The iron bedsteads had pretty counterpanes. There was good ventilation everywhere and there were no draughts. The right wing is devoted to women and children, and the left wing to men. In both wings there were green plants and flowers, games of all kinds, and a hundred things which proved the thoughtfulness of a woman. I was charmed with all the modern arrangements and with the efforts made to enliven the long hours of the sufferers. The vital organs of this little hospital are a matron, a house doctor, and three nurses.

Miss Newton, the matron, is a dark, slight woman of about thirty-five, evidently well fitted for an active life and rather pretty. In spite of her cap and apron and her plain blue serge dress, there is an unmistakable air of distinction about her. Her rooms are on the ground floor, and consist of a sitting-room, a bedroom, and a bathroom. She also has another room at her disposal for any visitor. Hospitality is so completely a part of English life, that every facility is given for exercising it. The matron is always backwards and forwards

in the wards, arranging a bandage here and saying a few words of encouragement there. She overlooks the nurses and instructs the probationers who are preparing for their examination. She is also responsible for the general management, for the keeping of the accounts, and for all the details of the organisation. She is answerable to the Committee for everything, and, for the enormous amount of work which all this means, she receives two hundred pounds a year. A man would certainly demand about eight hundred for a similar post. The doctor is a young Chilian, who studied in Manchester. He intends returning to his own country some day and founding a hospital of this kind. He has his rooms in the left wing of the house. The doctor and the matron take their meals together. Both of them are good musicians. The doctor plays the violin and the matron accompanies him on the piano. They can, therefore, spend very enjoyable evenings and everyone considers that quite natural. In France such comradeship would be impossible.

When an Englishwoman devotes her life to any special work, she does not consider it necessary to give up social intercourse or outdoor sports. She endeavours to refresh herself by these outside interests, so that she may renew her forces for the sake of those whom she is tending. All the nurses have to go out every day, either for a walk or for a cycle ride. When they have filled their lungs with oxygen they come back to their patients with fresh vigour and courage. Who would ever think of all that with us? Miss Newton is passionately fond of golf. She is received by all the best families and invited to the garden parties. In the garden she has a large tent in which she can work, and a hammock, so that she may rest in the fresh air. At a quarter to five all the patients go indoors, and the park is then an ideal place. Yesterday was Miss Newton's reception day, and, as it was delightful weather, tea was served outdoors. Her various friends, men and women, arrived on their cycles, on foot, or in their carriages. The cups of tea and the cake were passed round and conversation was soon animated. Nearly everyone present had visited Paris and they all spoke of it appreciatively, as

though their visit were now a pleasant memory to them. The hospital was hidden by the trees. I could not see it, and yet I could not forget it. I kept thinking of those poor bandaged heads, of those eyes which no longer reflected light and the surrounding objects. I had the sensation of all the suffering which was so near me and it affected me deeply.

Presently one of the nurses came hurrying towards us. "An accident!" exclaimed Miss Newton, putting the tea-pot down promptly.

The doctor, who was seated on the lawn, sprang up at once. It was an accident. A poor workman had just arrived with his eye injured. The matron excused herself to her guests and I asked permission to accompany her. We hurried to the hospital and Doctor A— was there before us. On arriving, we found a poor man with his face drawn with suffering. A live spark had flown into his eye.

"We shall soon take it out for you," said the doctor in a kind tone. "There is probably more pain than real mischief done."

Miss Newton laid her hand on the workman's shoulder.

"It won't be long, my friend, for our doctor is very clever at such things," she said, and then she added: "And, too, you are very brave, that is quite evident." She took his hand, drawing it through her arm, and guided him to another room.

I admired the clever, womanly way in which she tried to stimulate his courage.

For twenty minutes I waited there in great anguish. Miss Newton then appeared with her patient.

"The doctor answers for our eyesight," she exclaimed, joyfully.

The *our* that she used seemed to me adorable. I congratulated the man heartily and he seemed touched by my interest. The matron gave instructions about the bed he was to have, ordered a warm bath, and some broth, and left him in the hands of one of the nurses.

"We will send word to your wife," she said. "I hope she will find you comfortable."

And the divine work was accomplished. Science and charity,

in other words the higher forces, had come forward to repair the harm done by the brutal forces of life, and I hoped, with all my heart, that their victory might be complete.

We returned to the garden and, on the way, Miss Newton told me that the poor man's eye was grievously injured and that, in order to save the eyesight, fomentations, day and night, were necessary.

"Everything will be done," she added, "for the nurse is indefatigable, and she has already accomplished miracles by her clever nursing. I am admirably seconded in my work, at present."

"Your nurses are very pretty," I said, "and they look like ladies."

"They are ladies," she said, "and I should not engage them if they were not. One is the daughter of a gentleman farmer, the other of a doctor, and the third of a clergyman."

"It must be very necessary to have the vocation, for anyone to be able to live in the midst of such suffering," I remarked.

"Yes, it certainly is," answered Miss Newton. "Personally nothing seems to me so interesting as fighting disease. The cures are like so many victories. The pleasure of conquering is one of which one never wearies."

When we were once more on the lawn, the matron was a perfect hostess among her guests.

Dr. A— arrived soon after.

"You certainly deserve your tea," said Lady Hilda.

"And some sandwiches," added a young girl, handing it to him.

"Oh no, not all that," replied the Chilian, smiling, as he helped himself to bread and butter.

It seemed to me as I looked at this man, that with his dark, warm eyes, his sensual, but kind mouth, his expressive face, his graphic gestures, he animated and lighted up the Anglo-Saxon surroundings. I distinctly felt the presence of the Latin soul, and, as I frequently do when I meet with it, in a foreign country, I sent it mutely a little fraternal greeting.

That evening, at dinner, Mr. Redcliff asked me what I thought of their Eye Hospital.

"I found it consoling, in spite of its sadness," I replied. "It is admirably organised, and it has given me the impression of a very fine and true humaneness."

"I am glad to hear you say that," said my host simply, his face expressing his satisfaction.

"English people proclaim their love of liberty by useful and living works rather than by empty, platonic words," I remarked.

"It is true that, with us, nearly everything is done by private subscription. In Birmingham, we have a model hospital that was built in this way. Wealthy citizens, with us, usually try to interest men and women of the aristocracy in their works. They have the good sense to recognise that these people have certain qualities which they themselves have not had time to acquire. Instead of being jealous of these qualities, they endeavour to make use of them, and this system is certainly wise and practical. They choose a nobleman, perhaps, for Chairman of their Committee; but they would have too much dignity to ask for the support of the Government. In your country it is not like that."

"No, unfortunately, it is not," I assented. "The Frenchman is born economical, not to say miserly. He considers that, as he pays heavy taxes, the State ought to support charitable institutions. The State does not support them well, and the consequence is that the unfortunates have to suffer. The Republic proclaimed the rights of man, but Republicans only take advantage of the rights which cost them nothing."

"We do not pay vast sums for continual prayers for our dead," said Mr. Redcliff, "but we give donations to hospitals and to other institutions in memory of them. You will frequently see on subscription lists: 'In memory of my son'; or, 'In memory of my mother.'"

"I have noticed this and, in this way, the dead are doing good to the living. It seems to me that you prolong their existence on earth like this. It is surely the best way of loving our dead."

"What did you think about the moral atmosphere of our hospital?" asked Mr. Redcliff.

"It is very wholesome, very modern, and yet not at all *laic*."

"That word *laic* is in all your newspapers at present. I must own that I do not understand exactly your meaning when you use this word."

"We mean something enormous. This making things *laic* is an evolution that is taking place. The idea is to enforce civil rights in our country, but, in order to make our schools and colleges *laic*, not only has religion been taken out of the programme, but the very name of God. It is only right that religion should be excluded from the programme, as the pupils belong to various religions; but the very name of God, who is our dynamo, is not to be pronounced now. This would be grotesque, if it were not so terribly stupid. This absence of spirituality, of the divine, creates a hard, cold atmosphere, an anti-artistic ugliness for which I can only find the word *laic*."

"I see," exclaimed Dr. Nicoll, his face lighting up with comprehension.

"There are certain districts which are *laic*, there are also houses that are, and even people. I am giving you a very bad French lesson and I fancy you would do better to take the meaning of the word direct from the dictionary. In your Eye Hospital there is nothing of the gentleness and mystical charm peculiar to the hospitals where the Sisters of Charity are in authority; but I felt a warmth of humaneness and of good-will, the satisfaction of duties fulfilled, and that is why I say there is nothing *laic* about it."

"I am very glad," remarked Lady Hilda.

"The endurance of the Catholic Sister has always been a source of amazement and admiration to me," said Dr. Nicoll. "She never requires either comfort or outside entertainment of any kind. She neither refreshes herself with sports nor fresh air. She takes no holiday, and yet she never looks overdone as our nurses would."

"She gets her forces from the other world," I said. "That is a psychical phenomenon worthy of being studied by scientific men. A few years ago, for instance, a friend of mine was dying and I sat up all night with the Sister who was nursing her.

Towards day-break, after a very distressing night, I offered to make a cup of coffee for the Sister. 'No, thank you,' she replied; 'but perhaps you would remain with our patient while I just go to early mass. Nothing refreshes me as much as that.' I agreed, and, after changing her head-band and her guimpe, she went away. An hour later she returned, looking so fresh and so beaming that I gazed at her in amazement. She continued her nursing all day without a sign of fatigue."

"The question is," said Dr. Nicoll, "whether this psychical phenomenon, as you call it, is subjective or objective; whether it is produced by the imagination, or whether, outside ourselves, there are superior energies with which it is possible, by means of certain rites, to come into contact. This question needs an immense note of interrogation."

"Not only have these Sisters superior powers of endurance," said my hostess, "but they exercise a very beneficent influence over a certain category of individuals. We need such women in our reformatories, in our workhouses, with children."

"The devotion which can be fed and sustained by hope alone is very economical," put in Mr. Redcliff. "A liberal and practical Government would not fail to make use of this great force which is so cheap. I am surprised that yours does not."

"Our Government dare not be liberal, and as to being practical, it does not trouble about that. It understands the value of all money except that of the tax-payers."

"In England we cannot understand what justifies the expulsion of your congregations. It seems a perfect anachronism in the twentieth century. Is it not contrary to all the laws of liberty?" asked Mr. Redcliff, so seriously that I could not help smiling.

"In my country, liberty is not an absolute and all-powerful sovereign, as with you," I replied. "Liberty is at present only a little child, with which the Government does as it likes. In this particular case, it was possible to make the illegality legal. I have never yet found anyone who could explain to me how this was done."

"Who is to blame, in your opinion, the Government or the congregations?"

"Both of them. Some very ugly things were done in both camps under the cover of fine principles. The Government provoked the hatred of the clergy and of the Catholics by its open irreligion, its petty vexations and persecutions. The hatred of ecclesiastics and of pious people is something formidable, as they hate on their own account and on God's account. In the pulpit, at confession, and in the schools, they represented the Republic as the enemy. They flung themselves into the political fray, in order to fight it, and—they have been beaten. Without any calumny, I can affirm that they would bless war and defeat, if only all that could restore the monarchy to France. They have either forgotten or they do not know that they were never treated so arbitrarily as by kings. History is not their strong subject. In many of the convents the *fleur-de-lys* was secretly harboured and prayers were offered up for the return to power of the king. It is scarcely to be wondered at that the Republic should have taken away the right of teaching from a body of people so absolutely hostile."

"It is rather hard on French parents not to be able to give their children's education into the hands of the teachers they choose," said Lady Hilda.

"Yes," I replied; "but considering our character and the little respect we have for the liberty of others, it is preferable for us to have merely a general centre of education. The pupils of the religious order of teachers detest the pupils of lay teachers, and the latter return the hatred. The nation would have been divided against itself for ever."

"One of your sisterhoods has settled down near me," said one of my hostess's friends. "The nuns have opened a laundry where they get things up most beautifully. When they arrived in the neighbourhood, there was a great deal of unpleasantness at first, as everyone feared they would take the work away from our own laundry people. The latter very soon discovered that it was advantageous to learn from the nuns, at no expense to themselves, and, at present, we should all be very

sorry to see them go away. They have won all hearts by their affability and their charity. Personally, I am delighted to have them so near. They give me and my little girls French lessons, and they have opened a school for young children. Thanks to them, your beautiful language will soon become more general in our country."

"How glad I am to hear that," I said. "It really does seem as though Providence had specially decreed it. You see, our religious orders need reforming from time to time. This has always been done, thanks either to some superior minds, or to our kings. The latter have expelled certain orders, taken possession of their lands, and done away with them, as it were, in France. The very regularity with which these reforms have been operated proves their absolute necessity. This time the Republic has taken the matter in hand. Our Government has simply been called on to carry out a great work, and those who are thus called on to carry out great works are never liked, but all this was inevitable."

"Well, this is a curious political philosophy," remarked Dr. Nicoll.

"A woman's philosophy, so that you need not take any notice of it," I said. "The congregations sent to England go back to their primitive rôle, necessarily. They will not trouble about politics. Having perfect liberty, their character will acquire straightforwardness and tolerance. They will discover what loyalty means, for at present that is an unknown virtue to them. They will become impregnated with the more simple and virile spirit of English Catholicism. While they are in exile, they will learn how to love and serve their country in an intelligent way. In return for all this, they will give you much that is valuable, and this exchange will help forward the progress of the two nations."

"Your prophecy will perhaps prove to be correct," said Dr. Nicoll, smiling.

"Is Catholicism on the wane with you?" asked Mr. Redcliff.

"Among the lower classes and in rural districts, it certainly is," I replied. "When I was young, the peasants would come

to the threshold of the church, and, standing there, bareheaded, would listen to the Mass. At present, they do not appear. Last year, when I happened to be staying in the Yonne department, I counted, one Sunday, in the little twelfth-century church, fifteen women and a few children. This seemed to me such desertion that, out of a sort of sentimental loyalty to the faith of my childhood, I made a point of attending the services regularly myself. In this way I felt I was increasing the number of the attendants, if not of the believers."

"How do you account for this falling away?"

"Well, you see, our priests are the sons of peasants, many of them without any real vocation for their work. They have neither the prestige of birth, nor of education, and they are poor, shamefully poor. They are paid from thirty-six to forty-eight pounds a year. Formerly, thanks to the religious belief of their little flock, a certain authority was attributed to them which made them independent of money. At present, this belief does not exist. The peasants say quite openly that their priests are no good except for saying Mass, and this is true. They could have preached crusades against alcoholism, against dirt, and against vice which impoverishes the race, but their bishops are timid and not very intelligent. They would not allow the poor priests any initiative, and so they made them miss their train, as it were. They are compelled to spend their time going round and round their dogma, like blind men. On hearing their sermons, it is very evident that they are not in contact with the modern soul and they are out of contact with the soul of the people, which is still worse. Among the aristocracy, the middle class and the upper *bourgeois* class, thanks to the Jesuits and Dominicans, there is a recrudescence of faith. Such men are the only ones that Catholicism has of real worth, the only ones capable of defending it. They are very cultivated, very subtle, and very shrewd. They possess, in a supreme degree, what I call the psychical charm. They have an immense influence over women, and, through them, over the whole family. Of late years, politics have been supporting religion, so that the two finally are one and the same thing.

Towards day-break, after a very distressing night, I offered to make a cup of coffee for the Sister. 'No, thank you,' she replied; 'but perhaps you would remain with our patient while I just go to early mass. Nothing refreshes me as much as that.' I agreed, and, after changing her head-band and her guimpe, she went away. An hour later she returned, looking so fresh and so beaming that I gazed at her in amazement. She continued her nursing all day without a sign of fatigue."

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"Both of them. Some very ugly things were done in both camps under the cover of fine principles. The Government provoked the hatred of the clergy and of the Catholics by its open irreligion, its petty vexations and persecutions. The hatred of ecclesiastics and of pious people is something formidable, as they hate on their own account and on God's account. In the pulpit, at confession, and in the schools, they represented the Republic as the enemy. They flung themselves into the political fray, in order to fight it, and—they have been beaten. Without any calumny, I can affirm that they would bless war and defeat, if only all that could restore the monarchy to France. They have either forgotten or they do not know that they were never treated so arbitrarily as by kings. History is not their strong subject. In many of the convents the *fleur-de-lys* was secretly harboured and prayers were offered up for the return to power of the king. It is scarcely to be wondered at that the Republic should have taken away the right of teaching from a body of people so absolutely hostile."

"It is rather hard on French parents not to be able to give their children's education into the hands of the teachers they choose," said Lady Hilda.

"Yes," I replied; "but considering our character and the little respect we have for the liberty of others, it is preferable for us to have merely a general centre of education. The pupils of the religious order of teachers detest the pupils of lay teachers, and the latter return the hatred. The nation would have been divided against itself for ever."

"One of your sisterhoods has settled down near me," said one of my hostess's friends. "The nuns have opened a laundry where they get things up most beautifully. When they arrived in the neighbourhood, there was a great deal of unpleasantness at first, as everyone feared they would take the work away from our own laundry people. The latter very soon discovered that it was advantageous to learn from the nuns, at no expense to themselves, and, at present, we should all be very

Towards day-break, after a very distressing night, I offered to make a cup of coffee for the Sister. 'No, thank you,' she replied; 'but perhaps you would remain with our patient while I just go to early mass. Nothing refreshes me as much as that.' I agreed, and, after changing her head-band and her guimpe, she went away. An hour later she returned, looking so fresh and so beaming that I gazed at her in amazement. She continued her nursing all day without a sign of fatigue."

"The question is," said Dr. Nicoll, "whether this psychical phenomenon, as you call it, is subjective or objective; whether it is produced by the imagination, or whether, outside ourselves, there are superior energies with which it is possible, by means of certain rites, to come into contact. This question needs an immense note of interrogation."

"Not only have these Sisters superior powers of endurance," said my hostess, "but they exercise a very beneficent influence over a certain category of individuals. We need such women in our reformatories, in our workhouses, with children."

"The devotion which can be fed and sustained by hope alone is very economical," put in Mr. Redcliff. "A liberal and practical Government would not fail to make use of this great force which is so cheap. I am surprised that yours does not."

"Our Government dare not be liberal, and as to being practical, it does not trouble about that. It understands the value of all money except that of the tax-payers."

"In England we cannot understand what justifies the expulsion of your congregations. It seems a perfect anachronism in the twentieth century. Is it not contrary to all the laws of liberty?" asked Mr. Redcliff, so seriously that I could not help smiling.

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and who has more respect for others and for himself. Thanks to his early education, he has a clean imagination, a brain in which there are the fewest possible coarse pictures, as he has received no coarse impressions from an uncultured peasant woman. He owes his individual distinction, his frank, youthful look, and perhaps the limpid expression of his eyes to this clean imagination. The strong English language, devoid of delicate shades, would make it impossible to talk of the low realities of life. The French language allows us to play with such subjects without any great inconvenience. The Englishman has been brought up not to speak of them and they are always repugnant to him. In this country it is understood that certain subjects of conversation must be reserved for the club, the smoking-room, the mess-room or the bedroom, and, as a rule, they are not discussed elsewhere. This is merely a matter of discipline. Thanks to snobbishness, this reserve is imitated by the lower classes. In a good family in England, a cook, presiding at the servants' dinner-table, would not tolerate such conversation and allusions as we hear on our stage and in our social circles. She would consider all this fit for the stables. I spent two months in the neighbourhood of a great manufacturing centre. I never saw the disgusting sight there which offends the eyes on our Boulevards. An Englishman would consider Cambronne a hero, but not a gentleman. His famous speech at Waterloo, which has become historical, would, according to the English, never have come to the lips of a gentleman. Wellington might have uttered an energetic D—— with a capital letter. It would have been considered worse, but more clean.

An Englishman may have the lowest of vices, but his words will be all right. This is not the effect of hypocrisy, but of education and civilisation. Our neighbours are better educated and more civilised than we are. That is all. When living among them, it would seem as though they are not subject to certain humiliating laws of nature. Among French people it would be impossible to have that illusion and I have often deplored this.

John Bull does not resist the temptation of stealing his

neighbour's wife and ass, nor of infringing the sixth commandment any more than any other man. He does not boast of this though, and he even attempts to conceal his delinquencies. This is not due to hypocrisy, but to an innate reserve. He has the natural modesty peculiar to all big animals. I have several times had a revelation of this higher instinct which is really virile. Women learn modesty, but with men, it is natural. I remember once meeting a young Englishman coming along the Rue de Rivoli. I was smiling to myself at his British walk, when I saw an individual hold a card out to him, probably a transparent one. The blood rushed to the young man's face, colouring it to the very roots of his hair. He was carrying a very carefully rolled umbrella which he held horizontally. With this he pushed aside the vile wretch, just as he might have moved some filth from his path. He then continued his way, unmoved. The blush which came involuntarily to his face was not due to hypocrisy, but to the revolt of his instincts as a gentleman.

So much for John Bull's hypocrisy; let us now consider his egotism. In his social intercourse, I fancy he is less selfish than the Frenchman, for he is not so exclusive and he is much more hospitable. I have always seen him ready to put his strength at the service of his fellow creatures, whether women or children, and even at the service of animals. When I am with an Anglo-Saxon, I always feel that I am being protected. With a man of Latin race I feel as though I had to protect him and I instinctively become maternal. The Englishman is timid, and his timidity is often a veritable nervous affection. No one would imagine the torture an Englishman goes through when he has to enter a drawing-room, on coming back from India or Africa. He is capable of marrying the woman who puts him at his ease, out of sheer gratitude. This timidity is at the bottom of many of the *mésalliances*. Perhaps Nature had to restrict his power of action by means of it. It always seems as though the Anglo-Saxon likes to encourage things to come to him. I fancy this is because he dare not go out of his shell. He lacks intuition and general competence. He has the greatest

difficulty in assimilating foreign elements and in speaking any other language than his own. He is quite aware of this inferiority, and it paralyses his efforts and exasperates him. His pride and vanity suffer, but he conceals all this under an appearance of dignified indifference. If the foreigner should make the slightest advance or offer him the most insignificant little service, the Englishman immediately thaws completely. His well-balanced nature is incapable of sudden impulses and he is not subject to fits of enthusiasm. He always thinks it well over, before doing anyone a service; but when once he has done the service he never regrets it. He is a kind-hearted man with a forbidding look, an affectionate man who looks hard, and a gentle man who appears rough.

I do not think he is at all perfidious. In business affairs, he is always considered very straightforward and honourable. Crooked ways and finessing he considers waste of time. I fancy he must have invented the "fixed price" for things. In friendship he is loyal and sincere. Even his enemies acknowledge this, for he cuts people whom he no longer wishes to know. Statesmen are the only Englishmen who deserve to be called perfidious. They certainly lay traps for other nations and carry on the strategies of war in times of peace. A diplomat who will scheme some little infamy profitable to Mother England may be a perfect gentleman in private life. It would be as unjust to judge the Englishman by the foreign policy of his country as to judge the Frenchman by his home policy, as both these policies are unworthy of the two nations.

The Anglo-Saxon race produces extremes more than the Latin race does. One meets with individuals of every degree of moral elevation, of a purity that is almost infantine, and others as low and immoral as it is possible to be. The Englishman is distinctly a character. Education and character are his armour. If this begins to wear out, if a few nails give way, the slightest blow will knock it to pieces and the wearer with it. John Bull does not fall as the Frenchman does, he gives way altogether and very rarely gets up again. The microbe which destroys his armour more quickly than anything else is alcohol.

In England, this develops alike in the constitution of the poor and rich. The former refreshes it with gin or some other horror, and the latter with whiskey and soda, with cocktails, or with rare wines. In France, only the lower classes are affected by this microbe, but in England no class is spared.

It used to be the custom at men's dinners in England for the host to have a whole army of bottles placed on the sideboard, representing his best wine, and it was an understood thing that all these had to be emptied. When dinner was over the libations to Bacchus commenced, and frequently continued all night. If the domestics found the guests later on under the table, they would convey them respectfully to bedrooms. Such drinking bouts are rare in these days, but the terrible microbe is nearly everywhere now. It is my firm conviction that these infinitely small homicides are responsible for a great deal.

The Englishman gets intoxicated in a cold, methodical way. His eyes first lose their steady expression, a dull light then comes into them, and he remains almost motionless. It is very evident that he is no longer all there. His intoxication generally makes him sad. It stupefies him altogether, or else it arouses within him the primitive instincts. I scarcely know which is the more pitiful. The Englishman seems to have an instinctive respect for wine. He handles the bottles containing it as no one else does, and he has the greatest reverence for good Bordeaux, Burgundy, and old Port. After dinner he will remain alone at table, or with his masculine guests, in company with the wine. This is a sort of rite for him, and a most sacred one for many men. The rite is so conscientiously accomplished sometimes, that the adepts return to the drawing room with somewhat unsteady gait, and with their brain a trifle confused. Queen Victoria tried in vain to change this custom, but John Bull is a born conservative, particularly in matters concerning his privileges as a man, and this particular one is very dear to him.

No one ever thinks of the Englishman as being of the stuff of which our *grand amoureux* is made. He is capable, nevertheless, of experiencing a violent passion or a very tender and

profound sentiment. He may fall in love with some unfortunate creature who has some infirmity, as his strength is attracted by her weakness. He must have lost a great deal of his pride and honour before he would bring himself to marry a woman solely for her dowry. He is very impressionable so far as his senses are concerned, but he is not sensual. Woman has less place in his life than in that of the man of Latin race. He is more constant. The beauty of the face appeals to him more than that of the body, so that sculpture will probably never flourish in England. He is very chivalrous in his flirtations, and has the power of endurance of individuals conscious of their force. The satisfaction to his vanity, when the woman is pretty, makes up to him for the platonic love which is all that he is sometimes allowed. He has a childlike trust in his love-affairs. No man is so easily deceived, and no man resents deceit and treachery so intensely. Such things will make him hard, bitter, and sceptical for ever, or they may crush him like a reed. He sometimes seeks oblivion in danger, in big-game hunting, or in drink, and even then he does not always find it.

The Englishman brings a simplicity into his marriage which would astonish a Frenchman. He does not attempt to put any poetry or subtlety into it. He has no need of any illusions about it himself, and does not attempt to provide any for his wife. He is the male and is always selfish in that quality and only too often brutal. This is the grievance of many Englishwomen who are not very romantic or complex in their nature. It is certainly the cause of many divorces. English people consider George Ohnet's "Ironmaster" an immoral book, because the heroine refuses to be the wife of the man to whom she belongs legally. That is a capital crime in England. In all other matters the Englishman respects his wife's liberty more than the Frenchman does, and he allows her to take a more active part in life outside the home circle. He rarely makes her his confidant with regard to his anxieties and business affairs. This may be out of pride or out of kindness. He does not require her, either, to account to him for anything. I believe

I can say in perfect truth that there are more unhappy marriages in the Unknown Isle than in France.

In all an Englishman's various affections there is one very characteristic feature that does not exist or, at any rate, only in a slight degree with the Frenchman, and that is comradeship. There is always a certain comradeship in an Englishman's love, in his conjugal or fraternal love, and in his friendships. There is an infinite tenderness and staunchness in his comradeship and, unless I am very much mistaken, it is, although the Englishman little thinks it, his comradeship with a woman which protects her against himself.

John Bull has much more sentiment than we imagine. One proof among a hundred others is that column in the *Times*, with the births, marriages, and deaths. The arrangement is very symbolical.

Below these three headings is another one: *IN MEMORIAM*

IN MEMORY OF MY BELOVED SON, etc. . . .
IN MEMORY OF MY DEAR WIFE, etc. . . .

There is sentiment in all this, in the idea of bringing back the dead, as it were, among the living, of keeping their names fresh in the remembrance of their friends. That *In Memoriam* column, on the first page of a paper like the *Times*, is a proof that our neighbours have more heart than we are apt to fancy, and we may congratulate them on this.

No one ever thinks of the Englishman as brilliant and amusing. In our sense, he is certainly neither the one nor the other. He has not our quick, warm imagination. Repartees do not burst from his lips. They fall from them and always very straight. The satire and humour which he handles in a superior way make him dreaded at times. He always sees the comic or extraordinary side of a thing at once and, with an absolutely solemn face, will cause excessive mirth. Some men have a whole repertory of stories that they take about from house to house. Story-tellers are very much appreciated in England, much more so than singers or musicians, as a good story is liked more than anything else.

The Englishman has such difficulty in exteriorising himself that he is rarely a good talker. He has no general ideas, but is a born specialist. He will become devoted to a great man, for instance; he will study his work, dissect it carefully, become absolutely impregnated with it, and will then bring it to life again with the most extraordinary intensity. Ruskin gives us an example of this with Turner, whose prophet he constituted himself. Many Englishmen now attribute Shakespeare's works to Bacon. They endeavour to prove the truth of their theory to everyone who comes near them. If you should happen to say before one of these people that a certain quotation is from Shakespeare, you are told in a pompous way that it is from Bacon.

These intellectual passions are of frequent occurrence among our neighbours. They degenerate into harmless manias or hobbies and contribute to the reputation of English people for eccentricity.

In parliament, in the pulpit, and on the electioneering platform, the Englishman is saddled to one idea, and that idea is in all his phrases. By sheer force of repeating it for ever, he drives it like a nail into the brains of his audience. The oratorical art, which is dry and monotonous here, is intended for convincing and not for charming. In France, we endeavour to charm, in order to convince. How wonderful all these subtle differences are between the various inhabitants of the earth. The Frenchman has a religion and the Englishman the religious sentiment. Spirituality is at the bottom of the latter's soul. His concentrated mind is either conscious of God or it may remain refractory, and he is then openly agnostic. His worship of his Creator seems to me very manly and very dignified. God is the only being whom he addresses as Thou, and this seems to make God greater still.

When five or six Englishmen have an idea or a taste in common, they found a club in order to talk it over and to be able to smoke their pipes in its atmosphere. This is a special beatitude. In the same way, if some expression in the Bible brings some fresh conviction to their mind, they build a chapel in order to give it shelter and from that time forth they have another

sect. The club and the chapel play a great rôle in their lives. We are people of analysis and they are people of synthesis. Their mentality makes it very difficult, if not impossible, for them to comprehend the foreign soul, and more particularly ours. This lack of comprehension betrays itself constantly and frequently in an amusing way. In an article in the *Saturday Review*, a certain author, speaking of the melancholy produced by silent hunting, added with naïve pride: "The English do not feel this, but a Frenchman, wearing, no doubt, ridiculous clothes, has rendered it in these words: 'Oh, God, how sad the horn sounds in lonely woods!' "

This melancholy is not felt by the Englishman, and he is to be pitied on that account. No special clothes would ever make him experience that mysterious thrill which the Frenchman sometimes has on returning through the woods from shooting, at the close of an autumn day. Our neighbours admire Nature, but we feel it.

The Englishman makes fun of our sentimentality, but there are two traits in his character which, it seems to me, are still more ridiculous: snobbishness and vanity about clothes. Snobbishness exists in the whole race. It ought to have a complete study devoted to it, and it will have this some day. Englishmen are prouder of their plumage than any women are. They talk coats to each other, admire each other's overcoat. They adore their suits, their linen, their boots, and their bright uniforms. Men who discover that their lips and chin are well cut will at once shave. This was the reason of that disappearance of the moustache which surprised us so much a few years ago. I guessed the reason of that fashion and was greatly amused. Frenchmen look at women, but Englishmen delight in making women look at them. Before and after luncheon, they are on parade in Hyde Park, Piccadilly, and Bond Street exhibiting their shiny hats, their boots, of the latest style, and many of them turn in to their tailor's for a final brush-up before this parade. They walk along in their regular way, apparently indifferent, but in reality enjoying the admiration they cause. An English lady asked where smart Frenchmen

could be seen, and I was obliged to answer that they had no special place of exhibition.

It is a curious thing that although the Englishman is so well up in the art and refinements of dress himself, he does not pay much attention to the dress of women. He does not appreciate her elegance, whilst, on the other hand, a woman is most sensitive about a man's clothes. In the lower middle class, the wife would go without a dress or hat for herself, so that her husband might have a well-made black coat.

The Englishman, in reality, has the vanity of the male. In the animal kingdom the males are always the more beautiful and they delight in showing themselves off to advantage like the peacock. Nature has led man to wear sober clothes, so that he may be in harmony with his present work, and men have endeavoured to make the most effect they can with such clothes. The Anglo-Saxon has not only vanity of his physique, but also pride of race. He is puffed up with his own superiority. When he talks to a man of Latin race, he always has an irritating smile on his lips, the smile that he reserves for women and children. The Latin laughs at the Anglo-Saxon, but the Anglo-Saxon smiles at the Latin. To me, John Bull, with his simple mentality, his imperfect knowledge of life, and his inferiority in art, seems like an infant, an infant Hercules. His ideal is an ideal of discipline, liberty, order, and cleanliness. This ideal is not to be despised, as it forms the basis of all that is to become great, and if the Union Jack floats over so many different parts of the globe, it is because this ideal is within its folds. God needed the English for bringing the Boers into the ideal circle of civilisation, for teaching them something about hygiene, so that their infant mortality might decrease. He needed the Americans, in the same way, for purifying Cuba. These are works confided by God to these two nations. They put their shoulders valiantly to the Wheel of Progress. Without them this wheel would much more frequently have been wedged in the mud.

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And now for the Frenchman! My long sojourns in foreign countries have enabled me to stand far enough back to be able to portray him with some resemblance. In the preceding pages I have tried to be just, not so much on account of my liking for the English as out of respect for Providence, whose creatures and instruments they are. I must now be quite impartial, and that is most difficult. I delight in experimenting on myself and in straining all my faculties in order to see what they can do. Unfortunately, they are not yet able to do very much.

The Frenchman appears to me of average height, very agile, nervous, and intelligent. He is never so plain as an Anglo-Saxon and he is never so handsome. His forehead and his eyes are remarkable on account of their intellectual force and expression. The nose, chin, and mouth are weak and betray his sensuality. His moustache is absolutely characteristic. It is daring, witty, or vain; it puts a grave, acute, or circumflex accent on his face, and indicates his state of mind infallibly. When I want to know what sort of humour one of my fellow countrymen is in, I look at his moustache.

The Frenchman does not generally shine by the way in which he dresses. There is frequently a certain carelessness about his attire and his hair is not cut well. He gives one the impression of a human being who has not enough open space. He has not the clear complexion and clear eyes which plenty of fresh air and water give. We have not yet learnt the art of distributing these two wholesome elements. The Frenchman does not get his due share of either and, unfortunately, he has been brought up to do without rather than to claim it. That, too, is a matter of education.

No one wore the costume of former days with such grace and distinction as the Frenchman, but no man wears modern clothes so ungracefully. His temperament evidently rebels against the hard lines of the present fashion and he has the greatest difficulty in keeping them in shape. He has a predilection for open collars, neckties with long ends, shirt fronts that are not stiff. The garments to be seen at some of the important masculine outfitters prove that there is a latent

taste and inclination for the brilliant plumage of yore. This will never become democratised. With the French, masculine elegance is rare, there is no doubt about that, but it seems to me that it is the true elegance, for it does not accentuate the articulations in too pronounced a manner, and it leaves its natural suppleness to the body.

The Frenchman has not the noble look and the clearly cut features of the Italian nor of the Spaniard, as he is not of pure race. He is a Latin with a mixture of the Celt and the Frank. His country, too, taken from north to south and from east to west, presents a rare variety of soil, aspect, and climate, and all this accounts largely for his complexity. I attribute his feminine essence, his intuition, his desire for artistic perfection, and his delicate sensuality to the Latin element within him. To that, too, I attribute his frequent fits of enthusiasm, his lack of the practical sense, of organisation and of discipline. To the Celtic element I attribute his passionate violence, his idealism, his vague dreams, and his brilliant and, at the same time, coarse turn of mind. To the Frankish element I attribute his forethought, his dread of the future, his flashes of prudence and wisdom, his tenacity, that foundation of egoism and avarice which paralyses his first impulses, for his first impulse is generally fine. When all these various forces are well balanced, he is very near perfection. We can see from all this how it comes about that he thirsts for justice, and yet is unjust, that he is devoted to liberty, but incapable of comprehending it. He is at the same time great and mean, a maker and a destroyer of idols. And this is how it comes to pass that we can trace his ideas at the summit of all things and also in the lowest dregs. With the exception of the Slavonic soul there is none with such delicate shades, none that is so easily worked upon.

The Frenchman is the son of woman and that most evidently. He inherits her ardent imagination, her nervosity, her need of illusion and of love. Love is the wine of his youth, of his maturity, and even of his old age. He needs it to the very last, and it is only when he can have no more that he is willing to go away. He is the species that we call the "grand amou-

reux," and woman has an enormous place in his life. She is always to be found there, in his greatness, or in his low state. He still loves her in Oriental fashion; not for what she is, but for what she can give him. He is more and more annoyed to see her rising above the femininity which delivers her over to him. He may be generous to her, but he is never disinterested. When the Englishman or the American has rendered a woman any service, he considers it his duty to ask for nothing in return. The Frenchman then thinks that he has a right to ask for everything. The working-man, the *bourgeois*, or the nobleman will ask for the "pound of flesh" and, unfortunately, he obtains it. The Frenchman, in this respect, is not chivalrous. It is dangerous to flirt with him, as he always takes flirtations seriously. I have warned American women of this a hundred times over. His pride is not in conquering himself, but in conquering Eve. And no man judges the woman who has yielded to him more hardly than he does himself. He judges her just as his mother or sister might do, in the same words and with the same severity. When once his passion is spent, he becomes extraordinarily moral. The Anglo-Saxon loves the woman in his love affair, but the Frenchman loves love in the woman. He asks much from love, infinitely too much, in fact, and as he is always disappointed, he sets out again on his quest for happiness. This is really the explanation of his legendary reputation for infidelity, a reputation that is greatly exaggerated. He is capable of great refinement, delicacy, and poetry even in marriage. I have seen instances of this in the very poorest homes. He knows how to be husband, lover, and friend at the same time. He takes the trouble to win his wife. It would be difficult to say whether he plays this comedy for her sake or for his own. Even in a platonic way he likes woman's society. There are always some molecules of love in her vicinity and then, when with her, there is always something of that sweetness with which his mother surrounded his childhood and his youthful days. He is the son of woman, but he is not effeminate, as his work proves. No man is so apt to correct his own

faults and that, in my opinion, gives the measure of his ascensional force.

France is greatly loved by other countries, but the Frenchman is detested. I can guess the reason of this. Thanks to the faulty way in which he is educated as a child, he develops into an undisciplined individual. "He disturbs the atmosphere too much," as people say, and nothing is more irritating than this. Then, too, he is aggressively vain and is both nervous and impulsive. Unconsciously he only shows his faults. His good qualities have to be discovered, and these good qualities are of the highest order. There is a depth of sentiment in him that is never really altered either by his bad temper or his passions. He is sincere and is capable of brutality, rather than of treachery. An Englishman's bravery is in his temperament, in his muscles, whilst a Frenchman's bravery is in his soul. There is always a sentiment or an idea behind his heroism. This is the chivalrous side of his nature. He is not a born struggler, but he may become one, either through some great or petty ambition. In any effort that he makes, he is capricious and unequal. He takes life easily, and would be more likely to fail to keep a business appointment than an appointment with his lady love. It is always the time that he wants it to be in his calculations, and not the time that it actually is. He wastes his minutes and, like a child, plays on the road and is obliged to run afterwards to make up for his lost time. He does make up for it though, as the prosperity of his country proves. He is helped in his task by his marvellous intuition, and no man has so much natural science. It is thanks to this gift that, in spite of playing truant too much, he comes out first in art, science, and certain industries.

The Frenchman is not subject to freaks and infatuations like the Englishman. He is a man of general ideas. These come from twenty sides at once, pour into his brain all the time, and make him an unrivalled talker. He has a keen sense of the ridiculous, but the humoristic vein is rare with him. He is more given to chaff than to satire and he is refined even in his coarseness. In spite of his quick intelligence and his rapid

comprehension, he has as much difficulty as the Englishman in assimilating foreign languages and their genius. Both of them are imprisoned by their own strong individuality.

The Latin has not the fine spirituality of the Anglo-Saxon. He is always a trifle pagan. In his devotional exercises his soul is never entirely free from his senses. His true religion is idealism. The Anglo-Saxon seems to me to be nearer to God and the Latin nearer to the gods. I wonder whether this may seem an enormity?

My vision of the Englishman is canalised human electricity, travelling along a straight wire and going direct to the receiver. The Frenchman is free, unfettered electricity. His flashes and waves go to the right or to left and do not all reach the point they were to touch. This does not matter though, as they are not lost in life. They have their influence in one way or another.

I overheard a speech one day that was not intended for my ears.

"The Frenchman spoils France," someone was saying.

"It is the Frenchman who has made France, nevertheless," I remarked promptly, and I would now add: "He is its very soul at present."

. . . . . .

I have just been reading over what I have written. Where were all these pages? Where have they come from? I have the distinct impression that they were all written down in shorthand behind my forehead and that my thought developed them, just as the shorthand writer develops the abbreviated signs. The question is, though, when were they written down there? Do we come to earth with motors already stamped with impressions, or do they gradually become stamped? And how does the divine essence which sets them in motion reach them? All this I do not know. Whilst I was writing, the figures of various Englishmen and Frenchmen came to my mind again, as though to help me in my task. I saw the expression of their faces, their smiles, the contractions of their lips, and a whole crowd of characteristic traits which I should have

thought forgotten for ever. At the same time, another zone of my brain cells was active. This simultaneous work was all I could grasp and the result of this effort to look within myself is an abominable headache. The only thing is to resign ourselves to admiring without comprehending. Will there come a day when Nature will reveal her secrets to man?

London.

The majority of Frenchmen believe that an Englishwoman has yellow or red hair, freckles, long teeth, and large feet. She is supposed to spend her time climbing mountains or reading her Bible.

The majority of Englishmen think of the Frenchwoman as a graceful, frivolous, and perverted woman who is faithless to her husband. This is how the women who are at the top of the psychological ladder are judged by two great nations in the twentieth century. It is both annoying and disgraceful.

It seems that the clothing of the individual is in strict accordance with the individual's character and rôle. The dress of the Englishwoman always betrays her masculine essence, which is the soul of her race, and also the extremes to be found in her nature. She likes soft stuffs and also woollen materials that fall in stiff folds. She is just as much at home in her evening dress as in her tailor-made costumes. In a dressy toilette she looks out of her element, as though she is wearing her Sunday clothes. She shows how little she understands the art of dress by the lack of harmony in the colours she wears and by the unfinished look of her clothes. John Bull's daughter disdains the refinement of luxurious underclothes and rustling skirts. All this would interfere with her movements and she was created for an active life. Her choice of ornaments denotes a primitive and odd taste. She adores bangles, the jingle of many bracelets, and she likes to have a whole set of gold or silver implements dangling from her waist. When she sets up for being artistic or æsthetical, she is perfectly amazing.

The Englishwoman is very rarely well built. She has hard, straight lines. She has no outline or rather her outline lacks

many things. Her head, though, is frequently well set and she has the round throat of Grecian statuary. She is rather proud of this, and accentuates this line by the style in which she does her hair. She has plenty of muscle, and it would seem as though she had springs in her body, for her movements have no grace—they are harsh, set, and brusque. She has a swinging gait, as though she were intended to cover a great deal of ground, and she seems to amble as she walks.

There is an English plainness, but there is also an English beauty. English plainness, which is nearly always redeemed by an air of distinction, is very plain. On the other hand, an English beauty is very beautiful. She has all the shades of gold in her hair, delicate and yet brilliant colouring, well-cut features, and admirably well-set eyes. Although there are no nice-looking ugly women in the Unknown Isle, there are some very original and charming faces to be seen, some of which are fascinating on account of their strength and others on account of their sweetness.

The Englishwoman has a great deal of temperament, and she is not a magnetic woman. Her voice has no warmth, and her hand is dry; both are evidently bad conductors of electricity. Then, too, her face does not beam, her gaze is either dreamy or fixed, shy or bold. Either from affectation or innate haughtiness, her eyes rather avoid entering into contact with strangers. Her mouth is very firm, very proud, very hard, or else of the most childlike weakness. It often betrays extreme sensibility. Her physique and the qualities of her mind seem to me in perfect harmony with her soul, her character, and her mentality. My pen stops short as I write these words, hesitating at the difficulty of portraying them as I see them. I wonder whether I see them as Nature has fashioned them. The farther I go, the more respect I have for the work I am to reproduce. For what I am now going to describe I must revive, in my mind, a whole crowd of memories, a multitude of impressions. Will all these souvenirs and impressions give me the correct traits?

The English feminine soul! It is by no means the simple

soul, as thin as the body which is its envelope, that I have to describe. It is an androgynous soul, spiritualistic and enthusiastic. Its sentiments have all the more force, because they are not delicately shaded and because they find it difficult to exteriorise themselves. It is a religious soul, which feels God as naturally as it feels the sun. Its prayer, without familiarity and without mystical affection, is very dignified, full of faith and respect. The soul in which ideality is very much developed, which needs symbols, physical emotion, and a warmer worship, is High Church or Catholic. The more prosaic soul is Low Church. The average soul is Episcopalian. What a happy country of liberty where all people can build up the temple most suitable to their own special belief.

The English feminine soul is capable of comprehending the beauties of Nature and of art, and of sincerely admiring them. Our admiration has been set aflame by hers, but she does not yet understand Nature and art. She will, though, in time.

In the character of the Anglo-Saxon woman I see great straightforwardness and innate loyalty, a respect for truth and for a promise given, a sense of justice, mathematical exactness, devotion to duty, a love of struggle, and untiring perseverance. I also see a certain dryness and cupidity; much smallness, snobbishness, and petty vanity. The latter characteristic is like an implacable regulator. It kills a number of generous impulses, it encases the soul too rigidly, but it is necessary for the majority.

The Englishwoman has a very restricted vision, but on that very account a very distinct one. Her knowledge of life is extremely elementary. She has very little intuition. In order to know anything at all, she has to learn a great deal. Her literal mind makes her incapable of understanding humour, or of indulging in it herself. Her nature is not joyous or sunny. She may be interesting and original, but she is rarely amusing. In the very depths of her being, or rather of her imagination, there is sometimes a curious vein of morbidness which comes out in her strange idealism, in her artistic or literary attempts. This vein is, no doubt, produced by the masculine essence of

her race and the femininity of her sex, a most dangerous complexness.

The superiority of the Anglo-Saxon woman is neither in her soul nor in her character. It lies in her mentality as an apostle, an intellectual woman, an organiser, and a patriot. For the last forty years this mentality, destined as it is to take a great rôle, has been worked up by divine forces, so that it has become one of the most active agents of progress and of civilisation.

On the Continent, no one agrees about the Englishwoman. Some people believe in her morality and others in her immorality, either from hearsay or according to isolated examples. It seems to me that there are three distinct types of woman in England, the type in which the temperament governs, the type in which the character governs, and the type which belongs to the third sex.

The woman in whom temperament predominates offers very little resistance to temptation. She yields with a facility and a heedlessness astonishing to the Latin. She has a great deal of imagination, ruse, and shrewdness, and an unscrupulousness which makes her very dangerous. A man might escape the web woven for him by a Frenchwoman of this kind, but he would never escape the Englishwoman's web. She remains an *amoureuse* all her life. When she is old she will marry a young man, or she will have a paid lover. She will be mixed up in all kinds of intrigues, she will become a gambler, a drinker, a morpho-maniac, or a Lesbian. On studying such a woman closely, some hereditary blemish is nearly always to be found in her blood.

The woman who is governed, as it were, by her character, is absolutely virtuous. The majority, an immense majority of Englishwomen, belong to this category. Her education contributes to make her physically and morally healthy. Her active, outdoor life enables her to go triumphantly through the critical years of her youth. In the everyday comradeship with the young men of her set, her mind becomes more virile. The various sports to which she is addicted oblige her to ob-

serve a stricter rectitude, her eye acquires more exactness, and her step gets longer and firmer. She becomes inured to danger and to masculine magnetism. The comradeship acts like the touchstone and brings out the gold or the alloy of her composition. Among the companions of her childhood or her maidenhood, there may be one who awakens her heart. She then has a delicious period of pure love, during which she blossoms out fully in beauty and sentiment. In marriage, she is a prosaic and good wife. She has given herself to her husband for ever, and she never thinks of taking back what she has given, nor of playing the coquette with her husband. It always amuses me to think of an Englishman's bewilderment if his wife were to practise the coquetry of a French wife with her husband.

When in love, the Englishwoman is passionate, without any art. She is not sentimental, but she is always romantic. She is capable of falling in love with a man of inferior rank, with a coachman or courier, and of marrying him, fondly believing him to be a superior being. This characteristic, rarely met with now except among the women of the Northern countries, is often the cause of conjugal faithlessness and this is just as frequent in the Unknown Isle as in France, if not more so. In England, publishers make no difficulty about bringing out books in praise of free love, preaching the abolition of marriage or portraying very ugly love affairs, but they refuse books treating of adultery, even those treating of it with morality. This excessive precaution proves that John Bull has not much confidence in the virtue of Mrs. John Bull. He defends himself as best he can. In "criminal love" the Englishwoman is not very refined, and she does not attempt to poetise in any way. As a matter of fact, as soon as she is no longer "respectable" she falls at once into the lowest vulgarity. In France, vice is often redeemed by a something that is fascinating. In England, vice is repulsive, and this accounts for the extra morality of our neighbours.

The Anglo-Saxon woman is not absorbed by love like the Latin woman. She has even begun to speak against it, as she has discovered other sources of interest and of emotions in this

world. In spite of this, though, she has a sort of adoration for man. She likes his presence and his protection. She neglects nothing in order to attract and to keep him. She praises him more than he can stand. I am speaking now of the society woman. She pets and spoils him in the most ridiculous way. She is proud of his strength, of his athletic prowess, of his expeditions to far distant countries. When she says "our men," there is an unconscious pride in her accent, the pride of race more particularly. She has been dependent on man for a very long time and, in spite of all her efforts, she has some difficulty in shaking off his yoke. She does her best to hold the sugar-plum high, but the old hereditary instinct suddenly makes her lower her hand to his very lips. The Anglo-Saxon woman is not merely a woman. She is an apostle, and a wonderful instrument for propagandism. Providence does not put into her brain crowds of ideas at the same time, but one idea only. That idea takes root and becomes part of herself. She will spare no pains to spread it, she will brave ridicule and prejudices. She will even conquer her own shyness and take it to lecture rooms. She will mount with it on public platforms, and she will go to distant and inhospitable places with it. Some time ago numbers of women had a mania for distributing tracts. They were veritable advertisements for heaven and for good works. Some of these tracts were most naïve, others were extraordinary and even amusing. They were pushed into your hand, into your carriage. I have returned home sometimes with half a dozen of these leaflets. I used to be highly amused and to make great fun of them. This was stupid, for I can see now that they were capable of making an impression on certain minds. Perhaps they were destined to serve me in the work I am now doing, for the germ of this work existed, perhaps, at that time within me. Ah, we know so little. All I can say is that I once received a fine lesson on this subject, a lesson which I will now repeat in the hope that it may be of use to others.

Three years ago I was on my way to Cannes. There were two young Frenchmen in my compartment, and an English-

woman. The latter was a perfect specimen of the English old maid in all her ugliness and eccentricity. She was long and angular, and was wearing a heavy fur cape. She had a blotched complexion, an energetic-looking nose, faded light hair drawn to the back of her head in a plaited knot. She wore a soft felt hat, trimmed with those stiff feathers which look so aggressive. She had a distinguished air, in spite of her caricature-like outline, and was evidently a lady. Some very nice people had accompanied her to the station and settled her in the train with great solicitude. The three magnificent bouquets which she placed in the rack were undoubtedly given to her by friends. I was very foolishly surprised that such an individual could interest anyone.

Early in the morning we were awakened by the brilliant beams of the rising sun. The Englishwoman showed signs of great activity. She wiped her face with a fine towel, smoothed her hair, and polished up the window panes. After this she took a parcel of printed papers out of her bag and began to sort them on her lap and on the seat near her. The young men watched her, but had no idea, evidently, what she was about to do. I immediately guessed that the papers were tracts of some kind. The unknown woman continued her task in the most unmoved way, while we all watched her with an amused expression in our eyes. When she had finished to her own satisfaction, she picked up two of her tracts and looked at us very solemnly. She blushed with shyness, made a slight movement, hesitated, and then, with a great effort of will-power, stretched out her arm and offered me the first papers. With the same automatic gesture she then gave some papers to the young men. God alone, beside herself, knew what all this cost her, as what she was doing was quite contrary to social etiquette.

One of these papers represented a missionary, wearing an immense hat, seated under a palm tree. A negro in cotton drawers was standing in front of him and pointing to his bare feet:

"There," he was saying, "I have chosen the hardest roads for doing penitence, and my feet are covered with blood."

"My brother," was the missionary's amazing reply, "you have not understood the words of the Gospel. Christ has redeemed your sins, so that all your penitence is useless. Employ your time in helping your fellow creatures."

On the second paper, the verse of the Bible was given of which this scene was an illustration, and there was also a short prayer.

On reading this the two young men looked bewildered.

"Can you tell us what she wants?" asked one of them, appealing to me.

"Nothing at all," I answered, "except to turn your thoughts in a good direction." I then explained to him the idea of these tracts.

"How extraordinary these English are!" said the young man, proceeding to read the paper again.

"No penitence necessary!" he exclaimed gaily. "That will suit me well. I will keep the paper and show it to my mother, for she insists on my not eating meat on Fridays."

The Union Jack lady understood and her face lighted up with satisfaction.

"Are you going to distribute all these tracts in the South of France?" I asked her.

"Yes; I spend all my winter in Cannes, and, before starting I had them translated into French."

"Do you think that they really do any good?" I asked.

"I hope so. I sow the good seed—it is for God to make it grow."

The good seed! Yes, she had sown some in the compartment of that railway train and it had produced a spontaneous blossoming of better sentiments and of mutual kindliness, the *entente cordiale* in the first stage. She had, of course, by a simple prayer, turned our thoughts for a moment towards God. When the train stopped at Marseilles, the two young men undertook to order her tea at the refreshment room and when they returned to the carriage they brought her a little basket of fresh Tangerines. She was charmed with this thoughtfulness and she said to me in a low voice: "How nice Frenchmen

can be." She did not add the words, "when they like," but I understood perfectly well. I was quite sure that she had met with some who had not cared to be nice. As for me, I, too, had felt something of the attraction which she certainly had, thanks to the goodness within her. I was no longer surprised at the bouquets in the rack, and I should have liked to add another one as my offering of homage and expiation. I shall never laugh again at tracts.

Such, then, are the minds subject to infatuations; but these infatuations are sometimes transformed into very durable works.

A very great lady, of the ultra-worldly set, was one day seized with the desire to drag middle-class girls up out of their commonplace lives. She saw forces in them which could be put into action and she went ahead with the most admirable intelligence and hardihood. She started an agricultural college for them. She put them into a magnificent residence, surrounded by five acres of ground. For a very moderate sum these pupils can learn horticulture, apiculture, poultry farming, dairy work, etc. Only think of the strength and the moral and physical health which outdoor work will give to these girls who might all have become anæmic whilst waiting for the problematic husband. On leaving this college, duly supplied with certificates, they can take situations as gardeners to wealthy people, set up for themselves, or become lady farmers. I regret that I was not able to visit this college, but I am sure that everything there must be clean, wholesome and elegant, and that there will be something of the refinement of the foundress about everything.

Active mentalities of this kind have served to create what I call the third sex, and perhaps this will some day become the great sex. It is composed of married or unmarried women who take an active part in socialistic work. The acceleration of movement of the "Wheel of Things," has necessitated having more hands, and Providence has chosen the hands of the Anglo-Saxon women. It is a great honour for them, and the greater number of women than men in their country, at present, is probably for this end.

Femininism flourished for the third time in 1867, I believe, in the Unknown Isle. John Bull's daughter cut her hair short, masculinised her clothes, claimed legal equality, the right to have a higher education, the exercise of every profession, and the political vote. She preached rebellion against conjugal slavery, against the male more particularly, and this with an ardour which revealed an accumulation of hereditary hatred and rancour. A little socialism was mixed with all this. Thanks to the individualism which is at the bottom of the English character, this all took some time. Pamphlets, newspapers, reviews, tracts, lectures, meetings, all the means of suggestion that can be imagined were employed for propagating the new idea. The pioneers continued their work in spite of the hissing and jeering of the crowd. They were made the target of the satirists, and they were turned to ridicule on the stage. I used to call them "Woman's Righters," but I beg their pardon, as I did not understand then that they were accomplishing a mission. Some of them were very ugly, some of them were very fascinating in their androgynal costume, short dress, waistcoat, starched blouse, man's necktie, and felt hat more or less masculine.

A bad kind of femininism was first the outcome of all this, and was the pretext for a whole crowd of regrettable eccentricities. Things often happen in this way in England. At present this scum has almost disappeared and the work is coming out now in all its grandeur.

Woman has been revealed to woman. She is now aware that she is not only what clergymen and priests call "the sex," but she is an intelligence, an entity. Fresh horizons have been opened out to her, and noble ambitions have been awakened within her. The waves of this movement have spread out a little in every direction. They have touched France and they have reached Japan. In England, feminine colleges have been opened at Oxford and at Cambridge. King's College, London, has opened a branch for women. There are women students at the University. And this higher culture has produced doctors, chemists, economists, bachelors of art, remarkable

writers, a whole army of certificated nurses. In trade, women are formidable rivals now with working men. Women have obtained the vote on school boards and municipal boards. They have not yet obtained the political vote. They were short of weapons for forcing the doors of Parliament, but they are forcing them now. They were not ready for political life and would have done more harm than good there. As they were conquered in that direction, they turned the situation to account and plunged into humanitarian work. They have revealed themselves there as organisers of the first rank. With very simple machinery, they have been able to set things going in a way that will continue.

This third sex is waging war against alcoholism, against dirt, and against vice of all kinds. If England is the country where there are fewer deaths, where public health has improved, and where criminality has diminished, it is due to the increased efforts of these women.

In the Unknown Isle, the action not of woman, but of women, is felt everywhere. It can be recognised in the protection given to children and to animals, in the little refuges covered with verdure that the Temperance and other Societies have placed here and there near cab stands, so that the cabbies may get a refreshing cup of tea or coffee. It can be recognised in the drinking-troughs, where horses and other animals may quench their thirst. Women have their newspapers, too, and their reviews and clubs. They are solidarising more and more. When they want to bring about a reform, or to do away with some abuse, they club together and they often gain their cause. They have become *someone*. Curiously enough, within the last forty years they have increased in size, and men have decreased in size. The German socialist, Bebel, said in one of his speeches in 1892: "Wherever woman takes up socialistic work, there will be victory," and it seems as though he were right with regard to English women.

In the Anglo-Saxon woman I find the true humanitarian spirit, that which respects the dignity of the poor. She knows that it is her duty to work for the diminution of misery and

evil. She does this without any sentimentality, for the sake of the welfare of the country, the race, the human species. In all the various works in which she engages, it seems to me that her object is to enter into contact with the unfortunate, with the people, and to make them feel that the upper classes are not indifferent to them. It is with this end in view that certain great ladies give garden-parties to the poor and entertainments to the East End children, and are themselves the hostesses of these humble people. It seems to me that this is a great step towards fraternity. In these humanitarian schemes, there is also very much undertaken out of snobbishness and a desire for popularity. Many people make use of charity as a kind of spring-board for climbing, a few steps at a time, higher up the social ladder. What does this matter, though! I admire vanity when it serves for doing good.

This reminds me of an episode that I will relate, as there is something very characteristic about it.

Queen Alexandra really has deep sympathy with those who suffer in body or mind. She takes a great interest in the little maids-of-all-work, poor creatures who always have too much to do in this country of multitudes. Her Majesty is at the head of the Society which interests itself in their welfare. An immense garden-party was planned for them at Windsor about the time of the Coronation; but, on account of the King's illness, this could not take place. The Queen then asked several ladies of the aristocracy to receive a certain number of them in her name.

Lady J—— invited a hundred and twenty-five of them. I was present at this extremely English little fête. It took place at O——, about an hour's journey from London, in one of those country houses which we should style a *château*, but which bear the name of a Lodge, Hall, or Park in England.

Breaks were sent to the station to meet the Queen's guests, and a band welcomed them on their arrival. Lady J—— and her daughter received them at the park gates, and swings, games of all kinds, and an immense tent had been provided for them.

At half-past four they all took their seats at long tables, decorated with flowers, and laden with bread and butter, cake and fruit. Just at this moment, a telegram arrived from Her Majesty. She expressed her regret to "her dear guests" that she could not be with them, and she hoped that they would have a good tea and a pleasant afternoon. The royal message was greeted with hurrahs. One of the ladies who was helping Lady J—— suggested that a telegram of thanks should be sent, and it was immediately composed and sent off.

Lady J—— then stood up on a chair, with her right arm round one of the tent poles, and addressed a few words to the assembly. I was greatly struck by the spirit of her little address. She called these poor servants "My dear girls," and she told them how glad she was to receive them, and that Lord J—— regretted that he was obliged to be away that day. She spoke of the Queen's great interest in them and encouraged them to prove themselves worthy of it. In a very distinct, vibrating voice, she then spoke to them of loyalty, exhorted them to be loyal, not only to their sovereign, but to their employers, to their friends and companions, adding that that virtue alone would suffice for ennobling the humblest life. She finished up by expressing her own affectionate interest in them, and the hope that they would come again to O—— Park.

"Make a good tea," she said in conclusion, "and enjoy yourselves as much as you can." Three hearty cheers were given in reply to these words. I was amazed and charmed by it all. The Queen sending a telegram to these humble servants by way of coming into touch with them, Lady J—— offering her husband's apologies to them just as she would have done to people of her own circle—this was certainly a note I had never heard before.

After grace had been said and a verse of a hymn sung, the feast commenced. I looked at the guests with great curiosity. They were wearing their caps and white aprons. They had all added a bow of ribbon or some poor little ornament to their "livery." They were not tall, as English men and women only seem to develop when they have plenty of fresh air. Their

common-looking faces did not reveal much intelligence but a certain kindliness. Enjoyment and over-excitement gave a little brightness to their eyes and colour to their cheeks, and this was good to see. After going round the tables and saying a few pleasant words here and there, Lady J—— left her guests to themselves, so that they might feel more free. We went with her to the house, where tea was served in a very fine hall.

Just as I was leaving the park, later on, I turned round and took a final look at this picture of English life, little thinking then that I was to portray it later on. The remembrance of it remains very distinct in one of the cells of my brain.

The sky was a pinky grey. The house was a fine eighteenth-century building, of Italian style. Lady J—— was standing under the peristyle. She was very simply dressed in blue foulard with a black straw hat. Her daughter, Lady B——, was wearing a white cambric dress. Two little children were seated on the step. All around were well-kept lawns, to the right a few old cedar-trees with flowers at the foot, to the left an inviting meadow, in which some black cows were grazing. At the far end of the park, there was a moving mass that looked like so many birds with dark plumage and white heads. Some of them were swinging in the air and uttering joyful cries. They were the maids-of-all-work, the guests of the Queen of England. I turned round for a last look and saw Lady J—— gazing in that direction with an expression of solicitude and contentment in her eyes, and I took away with me a very charming picture of human fraternity.

On the way home I was told that Lady J—— was giving a party herself, two days later, to six hundred children. The lady who had taken me to O—— Park was to give a garden-party to three hundred other children the following week.

Sceptical people would ask if all this is not bluff. I should be surprised if there were not some bluff, as there is some to be found everywhere, even in Nature. When bluff is employed for lessening misery and for giving pleasure to the workers and to the children, we must not quarrel with it. We must go on bluffing, as it is allowable in such cases.

The mentality and the character of the Englishwoman have been revealed to me by her simple, strictly organised life and more particularly by her humanitarian work. I have seen her soul in a number of her writings, in a poem, among others, which is very little known by French people, the "Aurora Leigh" of Mrs. Browning. No woman has ever given such a work as that. It is full of living waves of love and poetry, through which a current of divine electricity, the most daring and noble ideas pass. There is, in this poem, a dream of fraternity of which it is a glory only to have dreamed.

All this, then, is what the woman with yellow or red hair, freckles, long teeth, big feet, the woman who climbs all the mountains and reads her Bible, does and can do.

. . . . . .

To go straight from the Englishwoman to the Frenchwoman—the jump is so enormous that it almost takes one's breath away. It is only necessary to see them side by side in order to realise that their rôles in this world are very different.

The Frenchwoman's build is suggestive of elegance rather than of force. She has a nervous, delicate body; her gait is quick, short. unequal, and her step light. Her hand is perfectly wonderful. It is skilful, intelligent, intuitive, and infinitely tender. No other woman has such a hand. Her dress reveals a cultivated taste. Her sense of colour and of line, and her dainty, pretty underclothes betray her secret worship of her femininity.

Although there may not be what might be styled French beauty, neither is there French ugliness. On the French side of the Channel even ugliness is pretty. The play of expression, and a sort of charm emanating from a plain Frenchwoman's face, will make one forget the imperfections of the features. I fancy that this intangible charm comes from the soul.

The French soul! I fancy that I can see it. Curiously enough it seems to me to be made up of brilliant, clear waves, mixed with blue and green. The brilliant tones are produced, I fancy, by the Latin element. It is moved by two master forces which are eminently Latin: intuition and imagination.

It divines, foresees, it goes to the other world and it dreams of the other world. Other forces, due to the Celtic and Frankish elements, great common sense, a need of order and a love of home, form the necessary counterpoise for its balance and, as a rule, it is very well balanced. It is a soul, too, that is naturally heroic. Nature has obtained from it all the efforts that it has needed. No history has so many heroines as ours, nor so glorious a feminine martyrology.

The Catholic religion—so profoundly psychical—man, and education have all combined to keep this soul for centuries in a state of captivity which has, of course, lessened it. I do not fear that, for I know that when the sap has been kept down it can still mount. It is time, now, that this sap should begin to mount again. It is high time.

In order to know a woman thoroughly, one must know how she prays and how she loves. Religion, I believe, is entirely subjective. It is the spiritual flower of each race and for every different race a different religion. The Frenchwoman is more intelligently Catholic than the Italian or the Spanish woman. Her mentality is not inclined for philosophical speculations. She will never become impassioned for the sake of an idea, for the sake of truth or of justice in itself. Everything, so far as she is concerned, is relative. A blind faith suits her. She must have an accessible God, a tabernacle, to which she can rivet her ideas. She must have legends, symbols, mysteries, the supernatural, a Paradise not too far away, the terror of hell, and psychical emotion. Her soul would find it difficult to aspire in a bare temple, or face to face with any of Nature's great spectacles. She needs a warm religious worship, the words of the liturgy, the sound of the organ, the odour of incense, the light of the wax tapers. The Catholic Church gives her all this and all this nourishes her dream, encourages her thirst for the ideal, all this sensitises her in the most extraordinary way.

For many Frenchwomen, religion is only a form of love, and man is the high priest of it, just as he is the high priest of their life. It is to the consecrated man that they tell their sins as

children, girls, and wives. It is to him that they confide their aspirations, their joys, and their sorrows. It is under his suggestion that they pray and that they do their good works. The pious woman and the mother of the Church never realise how small a place God really occupies in their spiritual life, and how large a place their confessor or their priest holds.

In provincial towns, religion is a certificate of respectability, a sign of good education. No one believes in the virtue of women unless they walk between its shafts. Everyone has a horror of unbelief and of independent minds, as they interfere with the routine that is considered sacred. When anyone wants information about a person the insidious question is put: "Is he or she a believer?" If the answer should not be in the affirmative, the person is avoided or treated with mistrust. Catholicism keeps the Frenchwoman in a state of strict dependence. It develops her soul, her imagination, and her senses; but it weakens her will power and her individuality. On the other hand, it gives to her soul certain delicate shades and it also gives her an undeniable charm. This still exists even with those women who no longer believe.

The Protestant Frenchwoman has a more cultivated mind, she is more straightforward, and has a saner judgment, but she is less feminine, less intuitive. Her atmosphere is much colder. This can be felt distinctly on going into a Protestant drawing-room immediately after leaving a Catholic one. This difference of atmosphere caused by religion is most curious. A business man, whom I should have thought insensible to the ambient air, remarked to me, one day, that on entering the lobby of a bank, it was possible to tell whether its directorate were Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish.

In love, as in prayer, the Frenchwoman is eminently Catholic. She brings into her love a delicate ideality, a delicate sensuality, and a whole crowd of shades. She loves *con tutti i fiocchi*, as the Italians say. She has the art of expression more than any other woman, and this is because she has much more intuition and imagination than temperament. Temperament is brutal and clumsy. It is better not to have too much.

The Frenchwoman is born virtuous. Of this I am sure. She often affects depravity for the sake of pleasing man. I have often studied the expressions of those poor girls in *cafés-concerts* who are destined to serve as a love aperitive. My heart always swells with pity as I watch them. The winks, grimaces, and obscene gestures, with which they emphasise their songs, are all put on. The majority of them would very much prefer leading a clean, wholesome life. How is it, then, that they are there? Ah, we do not know! . . .

The Frenchwoman is naturally very faithful and very devoted. In opposition to this assertion I shall probably be referred to the number of divorces. It appears that there is one to every eighty-seven or eighty-eight marriages. I consider this proportion very small, when we take into account the fact that the girl is generally the object of a business transaction between her parents and a man about whose past, character, and tastes she knows nothing. If divorce were as easy to obtain in other countries as in ours, it would certainly be much more frequent. The English legislators knew what they were about when they made it inaccessible to the majority.

There are many things—among others, religion, the children, certain scruples, and sentimentality—which prevent the Frenchwoman from breaking up an unhappy home. I will give one example among a hundred others.

One day, after hearing the account of the conjugal martyrdom endured by a poor peasant woman, I recommended her to get a divorce, and separate from her drunken husband.

"A divorce!" she repeated, and a softer expression came over her face, as she looked up at me with wet eyes.

"Ah, no, I could not insult him like that, because I loved him once," she explained simply.

I was mute with surprise and admiration. She no longer loved him, but she had loved him once, and on that account she could not inflict any humiliation on him. And she was quite unconscious of the beauty of this sentiment born in her soul! It seemed perfectly natural to her. That woman is the typical Frenchwoman. With her, more than with any

woman, the basis of love is maternity. As I have said elsewhere, she is the mother of the man, both the little and the big man. Her imperious instinct, and her supreme joy is to give him happiness. There is nothing very surprising, therefore, in the fact that sometimes she cannot resist him.

The Parisian woman is certainly responsible for that reputation of perversity and of lightness which Frenchwomen have abroad. The Parisian woman is a variety of our feminine species, but she is not the species. It is as unjust as it is unscientific to judge a whole species from one variety.

One may be born a provincial woman in Paris and a Parisian woman in the provinces. This is the opinion of the saleswomen of the Rue de la Paix, and their instinctive psychology is not to be disdained. The Parisian woman is the woman who, alone, absorbs and reflects the ambient atmosphere of Paris, its elegance, its wit, its refined sensuality. This woman certainly is one of the most intuitive subjects that the gods have put on this world's stage. She gives enormous relief to her rôle, no matter how humble a rôle it may be. She has no temperament, but she creates one for herself. She has no beauty, but she makes this for herself. She is an illusionist of the first rank. All this does not mean that she is absolutely artificial. She is simply, and quite unconsciously, a great artist. The *midinette* will pick up her dress quite naturally in such a way that she makes the best of her figure. The society woman will open her bolero slowly and skilfully, taking a gentle breath which will give to her silk or cambric blouse a sort of palpitating movement of life. Such manœuvres of our temptresses may be contemptible in themselves, but they are so cleverly executed that I frequently approve them with a smile.

I was lunching one day in spring at Armenonville, with an American friend and her husband. Opposite to her was a woman who was more elegant than pretty. During the meal this person produced a tiny gold-framed looking-glass and, with a little puff in her handkerchief, she powdered her face in the most dainty and artistic way. The stones in her rings flashed as her hand moved about, adding another grace to her gestures.

My companion watched all this as though fascinated, and when it was over, she sighed.

"We shall never be able to do these things," she said in a distressed tone that was most comic.

"Did you notice," I said, "that she took advantage of the moment when her husband had gone to speak to a friend at the other end of the room—a case of keeping up the man's illusions."

"Oh, yes; it is all very clever," replied Madame C—. "In America," she continued, after looking round attentively, "a place like this would be full of beauties. There are none here, and yet all these women are delicious and most interesting. I feel awkward and badly dressed among them. Oh, yes; they must certainly be the devil's own," she added with childish vexation.

"No, not quite that," I answered seriously.

As a matter of fact, Parisian women, living as they do at high pressure, in an atmosphere overheated by passions and desires, might be much worse than they are. A great many of them ennoble their social life by artistic or charitable work. I would not affirm that they have been created for spreading virtue abroad, but taste, elegance, and even frivolity. Their action is rather that of making the atmosphere lighter and more cheerful, and their influence reaches very far. If they were to disappear I fancy there would be less light in this world.

I have described how the Frenchwoman prays and how she loves, I will now tell you how she is brought up, so that she may be better understood and judged more fairly.

In the first place, her education is behind the times; it is behind that of the women of northern countries and her own mind is ahead of it. As a consequence, there is a painful lack of harmony. This education sterilises very many of her gifts and starts her in life with certain weaknesses that cannot be altered. In order to react as successfully as she does against all this, she must possess superior forces; but the reaction, nevertheless, causes great suffering. Her body and her brain are

treated with the most flagrant ignorance of what they are and of what they need. Parents and doctors are equally guilty. The vegetable plant is always tended more intelligently than the human plant. There is not enough space, air, or water given to a girl's body. She knows nothing of the delight of quick, free walks, of healthy outdoor games, of competition in skill, of the joy of winning in sports. Her exercise consists in walking along by a grown-up person and of trying to keep in step with this person. After all these years, I can still remember the deadly dulness of such walks. As to her brain, it now receives higher instruction, it is stuffed with combustibles, she is allowed to make steam, but no issue is prepared for that steam. Will-power, individual initiative, the organising faculty are never exercised. A pair of blinkers are put on to a girl, so that she may be compelled to look straight ahead of her only. She keeps squinting first to the right and then to the left, and it frequently happens that she goes on squinting all her life. Reduced to living on herself, she naturally absorbs all the poisons that the human being in formation distils, and she does not throw all these poisons out again. She dreams of nothing but marriage. She is waiting for that in order to have liberty, social position, happiness, in a word—to exist. She has had no opportunity of getting to know man, so that he very quickly exercises a rapid and complete fascination over her. If she should be a faithful wife, the husband becomes her object in life. If she should be a faithless wife, then her object in life is her lover; and, as a mother, it is her son. At the end of two or three years of marriage, a number of women who had studied very seriously and obtained all the certificates possible, have quite lost touch with the intellectual movement. When vital questions, which interest society at large, are discussed in their presence, it is very evident from the absent-minded look in their eyes that such questions are nothing to them. By their Latin and semi-Oriental education, they are still "the sex." A French mother would not make the brother give up to the sister as an American mother would. According to the old, hereditary notions,

the sister should obey the brother, because he is the male. I often meet working women in the street bringing their little boys home from school, and it is the mother who carries the bag of books. I can quite imagine the pleasure it really gives her to do this for her child, but it always exasperates me, as I know the consequences of this little weakness and that it will be repeated in a hundred other ways later on.

The Latin woman is not yet aware that she does not belong to man, but to society. She never talks to her son of his duty towards woman. She never teaches him that he is bound to help her, to protect her from every danger, and especially from himself. She never impresses him with this truth, that to dishonour and pervert a woman means to destroy a home, to do harm to the race, to the family, to the whole country. She does not know how to make a gentleman of a man, in this respect. This is why virtue is almost impossible, in France, for a work-girl who is at all pretty, for an actress, or for an artiste. This is what I mean in saying that woman is brought up here in an Oriental way.

I was once congratulating an American on the beautiful courtesy and kindness shown to women by his fellow-countrymen.

"That is all due to our mothers," he replied. "They continually inculcate chivalry into us, whether we are willing or not. They begin by placing the little girl on a pedestal and woe be to the brother or brother's friend who takes any liberties with her. The only punishment I ever had, and a good one, too, was for having put a handful of sand down my sister's back."

With this kind of education, wolves would be transformed into shepherds. I am afraid Frenchwomen will not try such methods for, as I say, they are still "the sex," and I am by no means proud of this.

There is nothing really surprising about it, considering the old-fashioned, unintelligent way in which girls are still educated. They have an innate kindliness, which is not always wise. They are sincere for the moment, they have a better

comprehension of virtue than of honour, sensitive nerves rather than a sensitive heart. The tears that spring so readily to their eyes are nervous tears. Their ideas are not generally strong and robust, their bursts of enthusiasm are rarely transformed into deeds, but all this is so pretty, so delicately shaded, and so brilliant that it is impossible to criticise unfavourably. Concentration is extremely difficult to them, they give a little of themselves here, a little there; they spend their energy in the most random way.

Their mentality is not the mentality of the apostle. They love their own religion, but they do not love religion. They love their own poor, but they do not love humanity. They love their own beauty, but they do not love beauty.

These qualities and faults are especially to be seen in their humanitarian work. At first sight this seems inferior to that of Englishwomen, but it is not inferior. The Catholic Church has canalised the high idealism of the race, and it has produced a multitude of religious orders, of Sisters of Charity. Thanks to the latter, children, women, old men, and unfortunates of every description have been helped, and these Sisters of Charity are women. They have supplied the necessary devotion and work, society women have supplied the money, and, thanks to these combined efforts, France is, perhaps, the country where people suffer the least, where the remedy is always to be found near to the evil.

In her good works, though, the Frenchwoman does not have the same sentiment as the Anglo-Saxon woman. As an illustration of this, I will give an instance which came under my notice.

Last year an American was sent to Paris, by the Princeton University, to study workmen's syndicates, and the condition of the workmen. His wife, who was young, pretty, and elegant, accompanied him. They went most courageously to live in a district inhabited by the working class. Whilst the husband was getting his information from all possible quarters the wife was preaching the use of the hair brush and the tooth brush, and her maid helped her in this mission. She had

beautiful hair and teeth herself, and she wanted to help others to cultivate their natural gifts. During her stay in Belleville she did much to encourage cleanliness and wholesomeness around her.

Such an idea would never have occurred to a Frenchwoman. Her education has made her timid, a lover of routine and exclusive. She is incapable of rising higher than the orbit in which she has grown up. If by chance she should have any generous initiative, she is at once accused of "posing." This silly, *bourgeois* accusation has killed numbers of good germs. On hearing that she is supposed to be posing, her self-respect induces her to return to the ranks. Snobbishness urges individuals to take the lead, but human respect holds them back.

It therefore follows that though the Frenchwoman exists, Frenchwomen do not exist. They have not yet entered into the heart of public work, the work of progress and of civilisation. These two words, which really mean more light, more cleanliness, more health, are, for the majority of people, synonymous of irreligion and of *laicism*. Newspapers are obliged to get corners swept out here and there; a Senator has to undertake a crusade against the disgraceful pornography which kills all virility. Men have to look after the domestic arrangements of Madame La France. At present the real guardians of the race do not yet feel that this duty devolves on them.

An American woman, with whom I was once travelling, picked up some illustrated papers that a young man had just left in the railway carriage.

"How can Frenchwomen allow such horrors to be sold!" she exclaimed, showing me some of them.

"Frenchwomen do not consider that their business," I replied.

"Not their business," my companion repeated, "and they have husbands and sons! Well, then, they are stupid or else they know very little about things."

She then proceeded to tear the papers up into small pieces, which she flung out of the window.

"There!" she exclaimed in a contented tone; "they will not dirty anyone else's mind, at any rate."

Dirty the mind! No, the Frenchwoman certainly does not realise all that this means. She does not take into consideration that a vile picture, on view at a newspaper stall, may catch the eye of her son, that it may stamp itself on his brain, rendering him, perhaps, more sensitive to certain temptations; that it may be the agent of his ruin and even of his death. No, the Frenchwoman does not reflect, her education has made her a woman of dreams, but not a woman who thinks.

Frenchwomen do not love their species. They are always with man. Their instinct does not urge them on to any solidarity. They work in little groups and, in consequence of this, their work remains only partially done and it is feeble. They have no idea of leaguing together in order to claim fairer laws for woman, and, among others, the paternity law. Mothers have not yet discovered how to obtain schools, colleges, and casinos that are fit for their children, nor yet the open space that is so necessary for the health of their little ones. There is no denying that they are very ignorant themselves about the laws of hygiene. They were never taught what they ought to know. Gifted as they naturally are, if only they had been better taught, they might become a great power in the State, a beneficent power. They are not yet aware of their own value and of their power. They have not yet been able to put down to their credit account one of those fine victories which are the glory of Anglo-Saxon women. A few years ago they felt a very slight reverberation of the English femininism. It was only very slight indeed, but it had a certain effect. It is impossible not to feel that the initial movement of their evolution has been given. What will be the result of it? Shall we have a third sex? I fancy so, and I think that the day will come when the Frenchman will find Eve, the redeemer, at his side, instead of Eve, the temptress. He will be rather cool towards her at first, I fancy, but in the end he will adore her. She will freshen up his cup of pleasure, she will pour purer wine into it, and a better race will be born. Nature is far from having finished with the Frenchwoman.

In the meantime, she is enriching her country by her work,

she is creating pleasant homes, she is giving happiness and joy, and all that is a great deal, a very great deal.

A ballad by Richepin, entitled *La Glu*, sums up for us the soul of the Frenchwoman. The ballad is a little masterpiece, and the story it contains is as follows:

La Glu asks her lover, who is poor, for his mother's heart to give to her dog. He kills his mother, takes her heart, and hurries with it to the woman, but she no longer loves him. In his haste he falls down, the heart falls to the ground. In a tearful voice the heart says: "My poor boy, are you hurt?"

This will give an idea of what the Frenchwoman really is, the woman who is supposed to be always light and frivolous, and faithless to her husband.

London.

The various features which are so characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon and the Frenchman are to be found in their language. The English language is not euphonious, and it has no modulations. Its beauty is in its force of expression and in its richness. Its grammar is simple. Its syntax, which is somewhat heavy, gives extremely graphic effects. Take, for instance, the words: "Two foam-covered horses——" The expression is not graceful, but when my eye and my thoughts arrive at the word "horses" they see them covered with foam, and the impression is most vivid.

The verb is the soul of the English language. Its variations and its shades of force are all given with the verb. It affirms by means of auxiliaries which express obligation, will-power, etc.: "shall, will, can, must, etc." It affirms with emphasis by the help of a verb of action "to do." "I do like this," is very different from our translation "*j'aime ceci.*" The double affirmative gives great force to the sentence. Its present participles are transformed into substantives, such as "your doing, your being," and these substantives which affirm have a vigour of expression for which there is no equivalent in French. We can say: "*Votre manière d'agir, votre manière d'être,*" but this is not the same thing.

The study of English is an education in itself. It has no shades, but it has tones. Its meaning cannot be mistaken, it cannot attenuate anything. It makes coarseness, vulgarity, lying, a breach of faith, stand out in a way which renders them all odious. When anyone once says, "I will——" it is difficult to go back on the words, as the person has willed to do the thing. The English language with its constant abbreviations, makes us feel the value of time, it urges us on to action, it hastens us towards progress. Its slang words are remarkably graphic. The English and the Americans manufacture the words they need, the latter invent fresh ones every day. The selection is quite natural, those that are good stay, the others disappear. As soon as the bicycle was invented, there was a verb "to bicycle." It was the same for the automobile. This was first called a "motor," and there is now the verb "to motor."

English is not the language for passion, but for human comradeship. It is the language for business, for sports, for virile thought, for philosophy, for humour, spirituality, and for the Bible. It is the language of nursery rhymes and of Shakespeare. Its vocabulary has words for painting the splendours of the East. It is above all a marvellous instrument of progress and of civilisation.

The French language is not so melodious as Italian, but foreigners like listening to it. Its orthography may be somewhat subtle and complex, but its syntax is admirable, as regards logic and simplicity. The French of our great writers has a wonderful firmness. A sort of light emanates from it which strikes both the eyes and the mind, and our great writers know all that it costs them to reproduce that light. In spite of its poverty, the French language is refined and elegant. Like a veritable *grande dame*, it can make coarseness less coarse and ugliness less ugly. It is not the language of love and passion, but of the soul and of sentiment. It is also the language of the intellect, of science. It possesses infinite shades and resources. No language is more difficult to handle; it is both a torture and a joy. Certain writers, at one time, en-

deavoured to disturb its beautiful, limpid water with strange words, but they did not succeed. Its genius kept it pure and clear. Another danger is threatening it now. Its high-priests alone have the right to give it *legitimate words*, and they are not very zealous in doing this. They love it in rather too platonic a way. They are making literature, but they are unacquainted with life. They do not notice that the ward they have in charge is gnawing its bit. As a matter of fact, it needs words, new words, red blood, in order to escape archaism, to be in the movement, and to be propagated. Like all children who are too strictly guarded, it takes from wherever it can what it is not allowed to have. When it comes out with a few neologisms, its guardians overwhelm it with their disdain and speak contemptuously of "modern jargon." A living jargon, though, is surely better than a dead language. I am quite sure, nevertheless, that the French language will never fall into archaism, as that would be its death, nor yet into vulgarity, which would be its decadence. Its genius will once more save it.

I was glancing to-day at the English, German, Russian, French, Italian, and Spanish newspapers spread out in an orderly way in the reading-room of this hotel. All these written languages have different expressions. German, with its endless capitals and its letters written close together, has something hard and aggressive about it, it seems to *scratch* the eyes. I cannot find any other way to express the impression it gave me. Russian seems like an inextricable medley. Italian and Spanish have a dignified, classical look, but they seem to belong to another epoch. English, so evidently masculine, and French, evidently feminine, with their distinct, simple letters, are quite twentieth century. They are agreeable to look at, congenial, as it were. The two races which have created these instruments must possess elements of duration and of supremacy, unless I am very much mistaken.

London.

Snobbishness! I have arrived at that now and, although the word is English, the thing is not exclusively so. It is

inherent to human nature, like vanity, and it is in reality a form of this. The Anglo-Saxons are particularly affected by it. It is impossible to be a week in England without seeing that. The most humble *employé* apes his master, the maid copies her mistress as closely as she dare. From the bottom to the top of the ladder, there is a servile imitation of all that is above one. The scheming that takes place, the strategy used, the lowness to which people descend in order to creep into a higher rank are all beyond words. The lower middle class panders to the higher middle class, the higher middle class to the aristocracy, the aristocracy to royalty—and royalty panders to His Majesty, Money. We cannot go beyond, as there is nothing above in that order of things. We are studying psychology and natural history now, and it is good to give and to hear every scientific truth. Snobbishness accounts for a great part of the loyalty of English people to their sovereigns. I do not fancy that the latter can make any mistake with regard to this. The death of Queen Victoria was certainly sincerely regretted, but the regret was very much attenuated by the satisfaction people felt at being able to wear mourning for a Queen, just like Court people. People in the most humble station of life felt greater. Certain middle-class women put on the most comically important look and were most disdainful towards republican nations who were deprived of such an honour. This was the most comical thing that Nature has yet shown us.

Such puerile vanity puzzled me for a long time. It seemed to me incompatible with the masculine character of our neighbours. I understand things better now. They have a simple nature which makes them strong and virile, but, at the same time, it keeps them children. They are imitators, because they are children and they are sensitive to suggestion, because they are children. In no other country does an idea or a fashion take so quickly and spread so rapidly as in England. Four or five years ago everyone ended a sentence with that irritating, "Don't you know?" It has no rhyme or reason, and was later on supplanted by the expressions, "Is that so?" "Really?" or "Rather!" In all these words, with which

conversation is punctuated, English women put a certain pretty affectation. The power of suggestion is enormous. If, some day, the King should take a fancy to walk on stilts, the majority of Englishmen would be transformed into stilt-walkers by the next day. Unfortunately, he will never take to them.

During one of the Homburg seasons, King Edward wore boots with thick soles and big nails. The men at once gave up their elegant shoes in order to imitate him. If he had turned up his sleeves as he did his trousers, his subjects would at once have done the same. And this would have been considered very *chic*.

Tattooing very nearly came into fashion again. A few Brummells had their skin illustrated. The cost and the suffering of the operation prevented others from returning to this primitive painting. I regret this out of pure love of art.

Snobbishness is responsible for a whole crowd of petty and contemptible things, but it also has a number of good things to its credit. About ten or twelve years ago the London slums awakened the pity and curiosity of the best society. Heaven alone knows to what suggestion this was due. People commenced exploring the zone of poverty and hunger. They shuddered with horror and gave money to relieve some of the misery. Slumming became the fashion, and no other word describes the spirit of this kind of charity so well. Idlers in search of fresh emotions, amateur philanthropists, made some openings north and south of the metropolis. These openings have been widened by serious people and the work of penetration has advanced.

I am told that it was a great lady who first had the idea of giving garden-parties to the poor and of receiving them at her house. She soon found plenty of imitators, because she was a great lady.

During the London season there are always a number of bazaars patronised by the women of the aristocracy. Middle-class people go there in crowds for the pleasure of elbowing the aristocrats and being in their atmosphere. They come away with empty purses, but their hearts swollen with delight, thanks

to the smiles of the titled stall-holders. It would be interesting to know what there is special about the smile of a Royal Highness or of a Duchess. It would probably puzzle these people to tell us, but it certainly gives them intense pleasure.

Charity, inspired by duty or by the love of humanity, is certainly nobler, but ordinary souls are incapable of that. What would urge such people to open their purses? I appeal to moralists who are so much better up than Nature on such things.

One often meets with the most amusing manifestations of snobbishness in London. In one of the large cosmopolitan hotels, on going to call on a friend, my eyes were attracted by a card put on the door of the next rooms to my friend's. I approached the door and read these words: "Visiting at C—— Castle." It was so childish, so shrewd, and so characteristic that I could not help laughing. I should have liked to steal this new kind of advertisement and to have had it framed. It very probably produced the effect desired, though.

Formerly I used only to see the vulgar and ridiculous side of snobbishness, but at present it seems to me a force created by Nature for curbing a crowd of violent instincts in our neighbours, and at the same time for holding them in and refining them. An individual who plays at being a gentleman becomes something of one. A woman of low birth who endeavours to look like a lady succeeds more or less in her attempt. She puts a damper on her own voice, watches over herself from morning to night, and practises generosity. There is a certain progress in all this.

I knew a wealthy manufacturer, a very intelligent man, remarkable in his way, but rough and not very well-bred; very authoritative at home and impolite to his servants. He was knighted and became Sir Charles Reading. I saw him again two years later on, and, to my amazement, found that his manners had greatly improved and that he seemed gentlemanly. He gave his orders properly, and controlled his temper. He turned crimson sometimes with the efforts he made, but he succeeded in mastering himself. And better than all this, he

built an agricultural school for orphans. On seeing this metamorphosis, I began to regret that the Republic, which has more right than Royalty to confer nobility on those who have served their country either in the realms of industry or art, should have renounced that privilege. Nobility would compel *parvenus* to be more circumspect, to have more decorum and more generosity. The Cross of the Legion of Honour has been distributed so freely that it has lost its prestige. Something else ought to be found now.

There are snobs in France as there are everywhere, but the Frenchman is not snobbish any more than the Italian or the Spaniard. His vanity lies in another direction. He is aware of his own value and he has no ambition to reflect the light of other people. He only cares to shine by his own light. The old aristocracy inspires him with a certain respect, the new aristocracy offends and irritates him. Neither of these aristocracies influences him sufficiently to induce him to follow their fashion, even with regard to any particular necktie. Snobbishness is not the specialty of that *grande dame*, the Latin race, but the more I consider its effects and its results, the more convinced I am that it is necessary for the Anglo-Saxon race. It is a fundamental force and such forces are needed for stirring enormous masses. Nature, which is always so admirable, has found a way to make it produce good. Flame does not mount by itself, the smoke mounts with it.

London.

What a wonderful Sunday I have spent! It has left such an impression on me that I want to fix the impression at once, before the warmth of it is lost. It seems to me that impressions must be communicated best by their warmth. I am always afraid that I may not be able to render what I have seen or felt, and when once I have more or less succeeded in this I am always surprised.

I lunched at Mrs. Nerwind's, and was agreeably surprised to find Miss Talbot there, on a fortnight's visit. Her presence quite changes the atmosphere of my friend's home. There is so much less life there usually, than in former days.

The Honourable Mrs. Nerwind is a widow of about sixty-five, without any children. Her faded hair is very smooth and she wears it in a loose coil at the back of her head. She wears no cap, which is a well-known sign of independence. Her large face, with its strong features, is characteristic of her originality. She has an aquiline nose, large, blue, intelligent eyes with a kind expression, and mocking lips. Probably without being aware of it herself, she has left the waters in which her caste and her generation are anchored, and she has not been able to enter thoroughly into the modern current. In consequence of this she is somewhat isolated morally. Her settled dislike of snobs, *bourgeois* people, and servants excites her wit in a droll way and keeps her combative spirit alive. It is not so much that she is prejudiced as that she is absolutely incapable of understanding such people.

For many years Mrs. Nerwind has spent her winters either in Italy or in the South of France. She does not return to London until towards the end of April. She then gets her house in order, puts flowers in her windows, and is at home to her friends and acquaintances. She manages to have a young girl of her own set with her when travelling, and as her guest when at home. Many elderly English ladies do this. It is a clever and practical way of getting a fresh hold on life. Mrs. Nerwind is specially fond of Miss Talbot, and she has owned to me that she can get on with her better than with anyone. I mentally congratulated Rodney once more.

"I have not invited anyone else," said my hostess, as we took our seats at the luncheon table, "as Ruby is going to take us to the tramps' service."

"Is there a religious service here for them?" I asked.

"Yes, quite near here," answered the girl. "When I am in London, I play the harmonium for them. It was started by Lady R——, and, since her death, her son has continued it. And all these poor wanderers, for they are really as homeless as the dogs in the Constantinople streets, can have their letters addressed to Duke Street. After the service, all the letters that have been received during the week are brought, the

clergyman reads out the names on the envelopes and every person claims his or her correspondence. In this way they are all able to receive any communication addressed to them."

"What a delightful idea!" I exclaimed. "It is certainly worthy of a woman," I added.

"Yes, is it not?" agreed Miss Talbot, her face lighting up with pride. "You must be prepared to be deeply touched. I hope you are not afraid of the suffering you will feel for these poor creatures?"

"No; I think we certainly owe them our sympathy."

"That is just my idea," remarked the girl.

"You know, I suppose, that Edith is coming to London with Rodney the day after to-morrow," said Mrs. Nerwind to me. "Yes, her rooms will be ready for her at Claridge's. By the by, what did you say when this young person told you the result of her week-end at Wimbledon?"

"I said to her, 'God help you!' It is the only thing I find to say when communications of this kind are made to me, for marriage is such a jump into the unknown."

"Please do not croak!" said Ruby, in a droll way, laying her hand on that of her friend.

"Very well, I will not croak."

"I am not afraid of anything with Rodney," continued the girl.

"Of course not," answered Mrs. Nerwind, her face lighting up with gentle mockery.

"Who would ever have thought that I should be a witness of the engagement of the little girl you think so much of," I said to my hostess. "It is very evident that the threads of our lives were to be interwoven for this coincidence to happen, and it is evident that a will brought this interweaving about."

"How did you two make each other's acquaintance?" asked Miss Talbot. "It was at the hotel, was it not?"

"Yes; we had looked at each other for a long time without speaking, and then we had taken to bowing to each other. Last autumn I went into the drawing-room one day with an American woman, and, continuing our conversation, I said:

'There is one thing that surpasses feminine vanity, and that is the vanity of the Englishman.' Mrs. Nerwind was writing in a corner of the room and I had not noticed her. On hearing my words, she turned round brusquely and exclaimed: 'You are quite right!' This was so spontaneous that I laughed heartily. That was the remark that broke the ice for us, and it is to that I owe the pleasure of this little luncheon party to-day. You see how things are all connected with each other. I do my best to show this up now as I do not think we notice it enough. This winter, at Monte Carlo, I was put into touch with your friends, the Barings."

"Yes, it really is extraordinary," said Ruby.

"I was a witness of their change of circumstances," I went on.

"Oh, I envy you that," said the girl. "If I had been at St. Olaf, I think I should have jumped out of my skin."

"Rather improper!" remarked our Amphitryon, with comic seriousness. "The Barings, I am sure, did nothing so shocking."

"No, the news was like a thunder-bolt for them, that was all," I said.

"And Rodney?" asked the young girl, colouring. "How did he receive the thunder-bolt?"

"Without budging, I assure you."

"The dear boy," said his fiancée.

"It is a pity, for Edith's sake, that Mr. Wilkes did not die five or six years ago," continued Mrs. Nerwind. "Edith was very beautiful, you know."

"She is so still," I said.

"Yes; but beside her regular features, she had a most extraordinarily brilliant complexion. Lord Crane's second son was passionately in love with her. His parents opposed the marriage at first, and he was ready to marry without their consent. Miss Baring refused to enter a family where she was not welcome."

"That is just like her," I said.

"The young man went out alone to China to join his regiment. Six months later on, Lord Crane learnt that Edith had refused

his son. He went himself to her mother to ask for her hand for him and the engagement was announced. The marriage was not to take place after all, for the young man died of cholera at Hong Kong. All that is some twelve years ago."

"And has there been no question of anyone else, since that?" I asked.

"Not that I know of," answered Mrs. Nerwind. "Mrs. Baring was not rich enough to bring her out well."

"All the same, I am convinced that she is in love with someone," remarked Ruby, gravely.

"You recognise the symptoms?"

"Yes. Rodney says it is an effect of my imagination; but in things of that kind, men are as blind as bats in daylight. What do you think, Pierre de Coulevain?"

"Just as you do, and I have had this impression from the very first."

"That is not at all surprising. A novelist ought to be more far-seeing than ordinary mortals."

"Oh, now that Miss Baring is an heiress, if there should be anyone in the background, he will not be long in coming forward. I am quite easy on that score," said Mrs. Nerwind, not without a touch of irony.

"Oh, come now," said Ruby, "there are such things as disinterested men. I can answer for that," she added with a happy laugh.

"All the same, Mr. Wilkes's will has put a good trump-card into Edith's hand and into her younger brother's, too."

"What is he like, this younger brother?" I asked curiously.

"He is charming," answered Ruby, "full of life and courage, a thorough prospector. American women admire him immensely. He is an out-and-out Liberal. I am quite sure that you will like him; but all the same, mind you are not faithless to my boy, as he would be terribly hurt."

"Where is Rodney going to stay?" I asked.

"In the bachelor's den of one of his friends, Bob Ashley, who has gone on a yachting cruise with his cousin. He is leaving Rodney everything, including his man-servant."

"You lend your houses as we might lend a pocket handkerchief," I said, laughing.

"Yes, it suits all parties. I hope Rodney will invite us to tea there."

"My rôle as chaperone is evidently going to be no sinecure," said Mrs. Nerwind, with a kind smile.

"No; but like all well-brought-up children, we shall not give you much trouble, and you will enjoy yourself without appearing to do so," said Ruby.

Affected, no doubt, by the thought of Rodney's approaching arrival, the young girl talked brilliantly all through luncheon. An unconscious joy emanated from her person which literally lighted up the dreary London dining-room, falling on us two old women like a warm ray of sunshine.

At three o'clock we set out for the tramps' service. Ruby took us to a house with a narrow frontage. At the end of the corridor we went into a sort of sitting-room, furnished with a table and a few chairs. We were received by the Honourable Mr. G——, Lord R——'s son. He was a man of about forty years of age, whom I should have taken for a clergyman, and who, in reality, took the place of one. He asked Ruby what hymns she preferred, but she replied that she would accompany any he liked.

"Well then," he said, "let us first ask God to inspire us with what may touch these unfortunates whom we want to help."

He then bent his tall figure and uttered some words, which I did not catch, that my companions repeated after him.

After this prayer, he took us into a large room that was very light and clean, and very well ventilated. We took our places on a platform. Mr. G—— had a table which served as a pulpit. Mrs. Nerwind and I sat just behind him and Ruby at the harmonium.

Not being accustomed to platforms, I felt horribly uncomfortable at first, and childishly timid. I had to make a veritable effort of will-power to conquer this. When once I ventured to look round the room every other sentiment but pity

vanished. I had the physical sensation that my heart, or at least what we call heart, had left me and was down there in the room. I had never before been in the presence of such a number of poor people. There were more than two hundred, and others kept arriving. An enamelled cup was given to each of them on entering and this they placed on the floor under their seat.

And to think that they were all uprooted, all homeless, that they had not any shelter at all. The words of the New Testament came to my mind: "The foxes have holes, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." Were not these words meant for them? And what I saw there was only the thousandth part of a human stream composed of thousands of individuals, the number of which I cannot venture to give, who are always tramping along, eating wherever they find food, and sleeping or dying where they fall. I examined them eagerly. The majority of them were men in the full force of age. With the exception of about three, their faces were not objectionable or repulsive; most of them had a kindly expression. A few heads were closely cropped. This was a sign that they were prisoners recently set free. How was it possible for them to try to get work when they were marked in this way? Their skin was tanned by dirt and bad weather, but they neither looked emaciated nor anæmic. On the contrary, they were well-built and vigorous. Why were they like this then, and how was it all? There must certainly have been some defect or some blemish in them just as in precious stones and metals. Alas! I soon saw the blemish. The craniums were all badly formed, there was something wrong with the foreheads, and there was an unsteady look in their eyes. God alone knew what alterations and what deep lesions there were in their cerebral covering. Were not nearly all of them subject to the microbe of alcoholism, that phylloxera of the human being, the destroyer of the cells of volition? Yes, they were the failures, the degenerates, and worthy of pity on that very account.

There were about fifty women to our left near the entrance.

As a mass they looked absolutely hideous. There were hats trimmed with the most lamentable feathers and flowers, and painted faces—the faces of drunken women. Many of them were soon dozing and some of them went sound asleep, putting their head down on their neighbour's shoulder. The neighbour never budged. She was willing to lend her shoulder to her sister in misery. Surely that is charity, and if we could have examined closely, I am sure that we should have found fragments of gold in all this impure throng. God, at any rate, always examines closely.

Absorbed as I was by this poignant picture, Mr. G——'s voice giving out the hymn made me start, and then I watched the tramps. To my great surprise, I saw them open the hymn-books and turn over the pages as though they were quite accustomed to them. Miss Talbot played over the first verse and then together with her and us, those lips accustomed to the vilest language, sang the following words:

"There is a land, a sunny land,
Where skies are ever bright,
Where evening shadows never fall,
The Saviour is its light.
If the cross we meekly bear
Then we the crown shall wear
When we shall dwell among the fair
In the bright for evermore.
There is a home, a glorious home," etc.

And the tramps hoped, no doubt, that all this would come true. Who would dare say that their hopes will be deceived?

A sunny land, a crown, and a glorious home! Such a vision made them forget perhaps, for a time, the Thames side, the days without bread and the nights without shelter. The expression of their faces softened, some of them brightened up, and a childlike look came into their eyes that was infinitely pathetic. This profession of faith, pronounced with them, gave me the sensation of human fraternity as nothing had ever done.

After the hymn, Mr. G—— spoke for a time and greatly disappointed me. Instead of the consoling words I expected, he told us in detail all about God cursing the serpent and tried to

prove that Christ, born of the woman, had come to earth to carry out the Divine threat.

"He will bruise the serpent's head," he added, with the firmest conviction. This text no doubt delighted him. He studied it in every way and repeated it at least twenty times with ever-increasing satisfaction. I did not see a sign of impatience among the audience. The tramps, hanging on the lips of the preacher, seemed to enjoy the idea of this chastisement inflicted on the enemy of the human race as much as he did.

When he had finished speaking, the Honourable Mr. G—— gave out another hymn. This time it began with the line: "The Lord my shepherd is."

My eyes were dim with tears as I looked at the tramps. And so God was their Shepherd!

"How badly He has tended them!" I said to myself. This bitter thought was in my mind when the following words came to my ears. Mrs. Nerwind was next to me singing them with her whole soul:

> "When living water gently flows
> He leads where heavenly pasture grows."

Then, again, I caught some more of the words:

> "Though I should walk through death's dark shade,
> My Shepherd is with me there."

The curious thing was that the certitude came to me that it would be like that for them. In that room, with the air rarefied by misery and suffering, I had a sudden impression of coolness, of the coolness of living waters flowing through the "heavenly pastures."

The sound of Ruby's voice relieved me, too. I looked at her and was charmed with her altogether. She was wearing a very simple white dress, and silk blouse, and a white straw hat. I could only see her sideways. She was no longer the gay, laughing girl who had enlivened us during luncheon. She was a woman, fully aware of the misery and abjection before her, and she was deeply compassionate in the most humane way.

After the hymn, the correspondence was brought in to Mr. G——.

Oh, the correspondence of those tramps, the poor, dirty black letters with zig-zag writing traced by the hands of men like children. Very many of them were not claimed, and perhaps never will be claimed. Mr. G—— read all the addresses. There were many Sams and Johns, and very many Smiths. Only five or six individuals were present of those for whom there were letters. When their names were called out, their faces lighted up with joy and pride. I fancy that they felt themselves somebody still, thanks to those letters. I wondered whither the winds of poverty had blown all the others. God alone knows, for He is their Shepherd.

Mr. G—— then went down from the platform into the room. Ruby was going too, but Mrs. Nerwind objected. The tea was brought in an urn and the man who poured it took it to every row. Baskets with large slices of appetising bread were then passed. I saw the host, who was a society man and the son of a nobleman, going about among his guests, the tramps, seeing that they were well looked after, bending down to hear a grievance, encouraging them, and consoling them all. This was the real sermon for them.

Like all Englishwomen, Mrs. Nerwind was accustomed to such gatherings. She spoke to the people near her, asking them if their tea were all right in a perfectly friendly, natural tone, just as she would have spoken to her equals.

On leaving Duke Street, we were very much touched and greatly impressed by all we had seen. We walked along in silence for some time in the direction of Mrs. Nerwind's. The streets were absolutely deserted and the July sun made them intolerably hot. We suddenly heard the Salvation Army music, and in the distance a detachment of its soldiers marching along.

"The Salvation Army!" I exclaimed. "Well, that seems to me to have been sent by Providence, after what I have just seen."

"My father considers that it is a public benefit," said Miss Talbot.

"Is that noise really necessary?" asked Mrs. Nerwind. "If we must have noise for rousing up sleeping consciences, why,

let them make it, of course—and everywhere," she added in a droll way.

We had tea in our hostess's study, and Ruby poured it and waited on us with the greatest attention. She then sat down herself, on the arm of my friend's chair, with her cup in her hand.

"Mr. G——'s little sermon disappointed me," I said.

"Oh, yes; and me too," exclaimed Ruby. "What good would all that do those poor creatures? I should just have said simply: 'My dear friends, I am sincerely interested in you all. I wish I could give you work and courage. I am sorry that I can only offer you tea; but at any rate you are very, very welcome to that.'"

A mocking smile was visible under Mrs. Nerwind's aquiline nose.

"I doubt whether that pretty little speech would have been as much appreciated as Mr. G——'s sermon," she said.

"Do you think the tramps liked that refrain: 'Christ would crush the serpent's head?'" I asked.

"Yes, because they are familiar with the text. Many of them must have heard it at the Sunday-school. The story of the lost paradise is, perhaps, the only one they remember. And then, too, the words of the Bible always act on English people, no matter how low they may be fallen."

"I had never thought of that," I said. "Your soul is so different from ours."

"Perhaps you are right," remarked Ruby. "When I see so many people homeless and fireless, I am a sentimental little goose."

"I am surprised that there is no clergyman for Duke Street," I said.

"There is one, but he is away on his holidays, and it is not easy to find a substitute. The tramps are Nonconformists, you see."

"Nonconformists, but you do not mean to say that they have a religious opinion."

"Oh yes, indeed! And what is more, they must have a

gentleman to preach. They would not listen to a man unless he were one. He would have no influence with them. And they know very well when a man is a gentleman, I can assure you."

"You see how far snobbishness goes with us," put in Mrs. Nerwind.

"Oh, you are surprising people," I said.

"Yes, we are queer people," confessed my hostess with a comic air of resignation.

"Anyhow," I said, "Lady R——'s work for these tramps is very touching."

"It is odd, anyhow."

"Blessings on the women capable of such oddities!" I added very feelingly.

On my way back to the hotel, I could not help thinking of those Nonconformist tramps who must have a gentleman to preach to them. This was quite a fresh feature of the English character for me.

French tramps probably have a political opinion, but I am quite sure they have no religious opinion.

A few hours later I was at table in Claridge's Hotel dining-room, and the picture that I had seen in Duke Street stood out in my mind in vivid relief. What a contrast! All around me I saw tables covered with fine damask, bright silver and glass, and decorated with flowers. The electric light was softened by pink shades. Dainty food and generous wines were there in abundance. The richly-dressed guests were human creatures who had never known hunger, thirst, cold, nor dirt, and who, when they went to sleep, could stretch out their limbs on cool or warm beds, according to the season. Why was there all this plenty, this comfort and beauty here, and why such privations, such suffering and ugliness there? The injustice of it all appeared to me so flagrant and so monstrous, that it excited in me an irresistible movement of indignation. My belief in divine equity was shaken as it had not been for a long time. I began to examine more closely the people who were dining, and I was compelled to own to myself that if they were

really Fortune's favourites they did not appear to know it themselves. Habit, that great leveller, had, no doubt, lessened for them the consciousness of their happiness, if indeed it had not taken it away from them altogether. The question is whether good fortune that we do not notice can be considered as such. The faces of those present reflected neither pleasure nor joy. A few of the people looked sullen or sad, and most of them looked bored. At any rate, I said to myself with a certain satisfaction, the tramps are never bored. As I looked round again, Métastasio's famous lines came into my mind:

"Se a ciascun, l'interno affanno
Si leggesse in fronte scritto,
Quanti mai che invidia fanno
Ci farebbero pietà," etc.

"If the hidden sorrow of each of us
Were written on our brow,
How many of those who are envied
Would win our pity now!"

These lines suddenly appeased my anger, and were a revelation to me. Does not God often speak to us by the voice of our poets?

London.

On each of my visits to England I have noticed the progress in taste. It is due a little to our vicinity and very much to that sudden passion for beauty which awoke in the English soul some forty years ago. Beauty, colour, and grace had been driven away by Cromwell, the Reformation, and the Puritans. Thanks to them, clothes were dark, lines stiff, faces hard and dull, and movements automatic. They created that special kind of ugliness which was the amusement of all Europe for so long. It was the reaction against laxness, sensuality, and Catholicism. All this had been introduced by the Stuarts and had threatened the genius of the race. It was, above all, the reaction of the masculine against the feminine.

Up to the middle of last century the Unknown Isle looked glacial. It might have been part of another planet, and of a

planet very distant from the sun. The houses were grey, with flat roofs, the interiors were cold and bare, and life was oppressively uniform and hopelessly dull. Those who got away from it and escaped to the Continent showed their spleen so unmistakably on their faces, that they are not yet forgotten. In the upper classes scepticism and materialism were developed in the most extraordinary manner. In the middle class there was nothing but bigotry, ignorance, and love of money, and among the people a coarse indifference. It was considered the thing to affect an absence of emotion, of sentiment, and even of patriotism, to declare oneself a citizen of the world. Royalism was thought humbug. As to those men with whom idealism and taste for art had taken refuge, the ambient air became intolerable and unbreathable for them. They left their country because, like Noah's dove, they could not find a branch on which they could live their life. Painters, poets, and thinkers were driven towards Italy. The gentle Latin mother welcomed them affectionately. She not only opened her arms to them, but her treasures and sanctuaries. A few rays from that centre of light created by humble artists in Umbria fell into the souls of men like Ruskin, Burne-Jones, and William Morris, and kindled there an inextinguishable love of Beauty. They took the divine exile with them back to England and made her known, thanks to their pen, brush, and words. A multitude of minds had, no doubt, been prepared to receive her. The return of Greek letters to the West did not cause greater enthusiasm than this. Everyone rushed towards Beauty as towards the source of joy. Not only the more elevated faculties were brought into play, but also the sensuality which had been kept under for so long a time. In all this effervescence, the pure, simple air of the Italian Primitives produced on the banks of the Thames a subtle and somewhat disturbing art, the true new art. The English Pre-Raphaelites, who had adored the simple Virgins with their long hands folded in prayer, created voluptuous women with intense expressions. This movement had the effect, at first, of bringing to the front certain strange, passionate, and morbid mentalities that searched

for Beauty where it could not be found, and demanded from it fresh sensations rather than more elevated pleasure. Æsthetic women were to be seen who were absolutely grotesque. The very sparrows would have had a fright on seeing them. There were æsthetic objects that were merely odd and ugly; æsthetic colours which were horrible; and æsthetic kisses, extremely complex and unwholesome. Soft stuffs became the fashion, and everyone tried to be vague in every sense of the word. In Hyde Park, people were to be seen wearing antique cloaks and mantles draped in Grecian style and caught up on the shoulder by enormous cameos. Houses were painted green or yellow, and such a green and such a yellow! I have not forgotten the horror of those colours. Flowers with long stalks came into favour, Easter lilies among others. The humble sunflower became an object of veneration. A regular gale of madness was blowing over England, and England is subject to such gales. They do plenty of harm, uprooting, scattering germs here and there, and driving men and things along new paths. This particular gale dispersed some of the mist that had been accumulating in the moral atmosphere of the country, gave to it the necessary artistic impetus for its progress, and then subsided.

This impetus has changed the whole aspect of England. Houses were made beautiful inside and out. Red bricks of a warm colour took the place of grey or white stone. Little huts became pretty cottages with sloping roofs and bow-windows. There is more air and more light now everywhere. Flowers came into English life and they are now part of it. A salutary influence is very rightly attributed to them, both on the mind and the body. They are to be seen under the most humble roofs, colleges, hospitals, in places of amusement, and in places of suffering. The housemaids who wait at table change the floral decorations every day, and some of them do this most artistically. In the restaurants of the large hotels in London, there is the greatest luxury in the way of flowers. At the Savoy, for instance, there will be a dinner-table entirely decorated with roses, with lilac, or with chrysanthemums

There is a special flower for the day. All this is charming and it makes the meal very delightful, almost æsthetic.

Society women go into districts inhabited by the poor, and they talk about beauty and show the people how to develop it and how to create it out of nothing. They have instituted prizes for window decoration, and for cleanliness in the home. This year, a little boy of twelve received a watch and a small sum of money for the geraniums he had grown on the window-ledge of his home. In this way the windows of the metropolis will gradually be enlivened by bright flowers, not only in the wealthy neighbourhoods, but in the poor ones, too.

This effort to have beauty is very remarkable. Our neighbours have not yet attained perfection, if we may judge by the last Coronation decorations. The Canadian Archway, which cost an enormous sum of money, looked as though it had been put up by children. In the West End there were some grotesque cartouches, some "God save the King" mottoes, that might have been manufactured in the nursery.

There is a certain cult of beauty now in England and it has its priestesses and its apostles. I was told of a woman who has devoted her life to it for years. She maintains that youthfulness may be prolonged and ugliness lessened in all classes of society, not by means of ointments and clever massage, but by a constant suggestion of harmony and perfect hygienic conditions. I am told that she has accomplished extraordinary transformations in this way, improved irregular features, remodelled the body, and given charm and grace to it. She has made her home a place of beauty, where only beautiful lines are to be seen, where no disagreeable sounds are to be heard, and where there are no objects except those that are pleasant to touch. Is this madness or is it science? I am told that although this woman is fifty she scarcely looks thirty, and that her expression is always wonderfully serene.

This æstheticism, which we do not yet practise in France, is the work of the renaissance of which I have spoken, and I feel great inward satisfaction when I remember that this renaissance was due to the great Latin soul and to the feminine element above all.

English taste is very characteristic. It is not like that of any other nation. Taste is the intuition of the harmony that is necessary for arriving at the beautiful, it is more especially the intuition of what is suitable and fitting. Taste is, of course, subjective. It is one of the thousands of ways in which individuals are exteriorised. Consequently, there is English taste, German taste, Italian taste, French taste, etc. Each is good in its own way when it produces harmony. Oriental people know the secret of this harmony better than the people of the Western hemisphere. No one could say that the Chinese, the Japanese, or the Arabs have bad taste, because they possess the sense of the colours, lines, and clothes suitable for themselves and their setting. This spring I was in the Avenue de l'Opéra, when there was a block for a moment, caused by a number of carriages. In one of them, near the footpath, was a Chinaman. With his purple satin robe, his black cap, his plait down his back, his refined, amber-coloured face, his hands in his wide sleeves, he struck me as such a perfect piece of harmony that I could not take my eyes from him. Europeans looked vulgar beside him. If only he had been wearing a tall hat instead of the cap the effect would have been entirely destroyed. English taste betrays the masculinity of the race in everything. In objects of art, in furniture, and in clothes it is the straight line that predominates and its combinations are good. The curved line, on the contrary, is not good. There is generally no grace or flexibility about it, and it is always somewhat odd. Only great artists know how to treat the curved line. The intuition of harmony is rare with our neighbours. In this order of things they have not a sense of what is fitting and suitable. Let us take one example among a thousand. Women of the lowest class, the very poorest even, have a passion for feathers. This taste may perhaps be due to atavism. They will always find a way to procure their beloved feathers, and they then plant them on their poor deformed hats with childish pleasure. They do their work with these hats on, and this ornament appears to confer on them a certain distinction. The feathers are all out of curl, most lamentable-looking, very much like

fish bones, as an Englishwoman once said to me. When they are jerked about with the movement of the head, it would be irresistibly comic, if only it were allowable to laugh at the poor and weak. A Frenchwoman of the same class would feel instinctively that a befeathered hat would not be suitable to the rest of her dress, and she would not make herself grotesque by wearing one.

This lack of harmony is to be seen in all classes. We frequently see specimens of it on the Continent and it gives us an exaggerated idea of British bad taste. This spring I was in one of the best tea-rooms in Paris, and there was a particularly brilliant assembly there that day. A young English couple of very good class entered. The lady was wearing a tailor-made costume of rough grey material, with a skirt cut short to the ankles, and yellow shoes. On her pretty head was an enormous red Tam o' Shanter. The man wore a brown tweed suit and cap to match. They looked as though they had just come out of a sleeping-car. Their arrival made such a sensation that many cups of tea and pieces of cake were stopped halfway between the table and the mouth. The better brought-up people merely smiled, but the others laughed outright, and I heard murmurs near me of: "Oh, these English!" The young wife blushed and the husband knitted his brows and bit his lips. They took refuge at the far end of the room like two children sent into a corner. I am sure that they felt insulted, and that they left that tea-room disliking the French. It was really all their own fault, though, as they had shown neither tact nor good taste. Their travelling costume would not have attracted attention, but that huge red Tam o' Shanter in a Parisian tea-room was both out of place and comic. Another day, under the arcades of the Rue de Castiglione, I saw an English lady with her daughter of ten years old, dressed in Quaker style, with a long dress of woollen material and a collar and large hat of white cambric. The child with her pretty light hair, her pink complexion, and her blue eyes, had a Puritanical look, and was adorable. Everyone turned round and even stopped to look at her. In London, where all kinds of

eccentricities are to be seen, no one would have noticed her. In Paris, except at Carnival times, we are not accustomed to fancy dress in the street, and this one astonished people. The mother looked furious at Parisian manners, but she was to blame for ignoring our customs.

I went to a wedding the other morning at St. George's Church. The six little bridesmaids, of twelve to fourteen years old, were dressed in white satin with Puritan bonnets of white satin lined with pink. The bride's train was carried by two pages in white breeches and pink coats. Here, in London, all this seemed ideally beautiful, but in Paris we should have considered it in very bad taste, and it would have given everyone the impression of a circus parade.

It is impossible to see things or to feel things in the same way on the banks of the Thames as on the banks of the Seine. We must not only admit that, but we must also learn to admire the infinite art with which Nature varies and harmonises places, people, and things.

In matters of dress, English feminine taste is not commonplace. It reveals the soul that I have been attempting to analyse. It is an androgynous taste. No other adjective describes it so correctly. When it keeps to its masculinity in costumes for the country, for travelling, and for sports, it is simple and excellent. When it tries to become feminine, in its dress for visiting and evening wear, it is at once complex and all wrong. It then betrays ridiculous affectation, a morbid imagination, and an inclination for the romantic and for pose, a sort of moral disguise, in fact. I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity of studying one of its latest manifestations, a very curious manifestation, in which there certainly is an idea.

I went for a drive this afternoon in Hyde Park with a very pretty Englishwoman of my acquaintance. The conversation could not fail to touch on dress. I like it myself, and it has for me now, like everything else in the world, a very great significance.

"I have been faithless to Paris for my evening dresses,"

owned Mrs. Campbell. "We have a lady dressmaker, a society woman, who is a great artist, and who creates masterpieces. Her costumes are all intended to express some symbol, some sentiment, or state of mind. She has created an ideal dress for me in shades of grey, rose, and veiled gold. I seem to be making light as I walk along. She has named it: 'A Silent Appeal!'"

I nearly sprang out of the carriage in my horror.

"Do you mean to say that you go about wearing a dress that is 'A Silent Appeal?'" I exclaimed. "Why, it is dreadful!"

My friend blushed.

"Oh, do not judge with your French mind," she said. "It is art, that is all; art in chiffon. I have another dress in transparent material in all shades of the softest green. That one is named 'Fluid Murmur of Spring Verdure.'"

"That is less compromising than the other," I said. "I must see these symbolical dresses. You arouse my curiosity."

"I will show them you, and, if you like, I will take you to Lydia's. You will see her latest models, and she has an exhibition of linen now on view."

"I should just think I should like to see them. Only to think that there are psychical dresses to be seen in London, and that I did not know about them, and am wasting my time every day in places like Westminster Abbey and the British Museum."

"Ah, you are making fun now. I take back my invitation."

"No, please do not. I will not make fun and I will promise to examine your Lydia's creations with all due respect."

My friend then gave her coachman this famous dressmaker's address.

We drew up in front of what appeared to be a private house.

On entering, I noticed that everything gave the impression of studied elegance. We went upstairs to see the linen exhibition. On arriving there, I saw, to my great stupefaction, a girl lying down in what an American woman has so prettily named "the dreaming dress," and what is known vulgarly as the nightdress. Our model at once rose and walked slowly

towards the dressing table. With a solemnity that was almost religious she was then clothed with every garment of feminine underwear. And this in a country where the name of the first garment was never pronounced only forty years ago.

"Holy Mother England!" I said in a whisper.

"It is art," said Mrs. Campbell, with droll gravity.

I examined these specimens of English under-linen. It seemed to me that they were of pretentious shapes, and there was an exaggeration of frills and furbelows. The embroidery, lace, and general finish were all far from having the finish to be found in the first Parisian houses. The ribbons were tied clumsily, for only French fingers can tie bows. In all their details, these pretty things betrayed an art very inferior to ours, and I felt a certain satisfaction on seeing this.

We were then taken into a magnificent room, decorated in Adam style, which looked something like a small theatre. At the end of this room was a small stage prettily draped and decorated with climbing plants and foliage. Models began at once to file by, and the symbolical dresses they wore were announced just as persons are announced. My astonished ears caught such names as "The Tangible Present," a pink velvet dress, shot with marvellous shades; "The Vampire," a dress of soft grey, striped with bright, hard gold; "Thoughts of Strange Things," a combination of dark browns, greys, and greens with pearly lace; "Passionate Hours," a symphony in red; "Perfumed Silence," mauve and grey, and finally the climax, "The Funeral Hymn of the Death of Pleasure." This hymn was represented by transparent grey-coloured material, veiling blue, rose, and gold.

All these shades of colour, ornaments, spangles, and beads, arranged so that the light should fall on them according to the movements of the body, were certainly art, but an art which denoted something extremely far-fetched, an affectation of intensity, that morbid vein which is sometimes to be met with in the English mind but which does not exist in ours.

Just as I was thinking of this, my eyes fell upon a young woman seated quite near me. She was so remarkably thin

that one wondered how the organs of life could find room within her. She wore an immense hat trimmed with feathers. She had heavy brown hair tinged, either naturally or artificially, with bronze, a wide, low forehead, eyebrows that were not arched and which almost joined above a straight nose, and a wide mouth with very red lips. She was dressed in black silk muslin, relieved with sombre jet, which was no doubt some symbol. She looked to me like a living picture by Burne-Jones. She had all the strangeness and intensity of his pictures, and this explained them to me.

These psychical dresses were strangely lacking in grace and neatness. They hung down with an affectation of carelessness and languor. The models were thin girls with long necks, sloping shoulders, and hair that was too voluminous. They glided over the carpet, endeavoured to walk in an undulating way, and to make the gold, steel, or pearl of their skirts sparkle in an artistic manner. Each of them endeavoured to put on the expression of the symbol she was representing. The "Vampire" looked tragic and fatal, whilst "Thoughts of Strange Things" showed all the whites of her eyes. One of them looked like a sick dove, and another was simulating passion in a very droll way. And all these expressions were sham ones, pitifully artificial. Poor girls! They were not only obliged to try on dresses all the time, but to assimilate the state of mind intended for each dress. That really is asking too much of them. I should like to have known the woman who conceived the idea, and ventured to carry it out, but unfortunately she was away from home.

Whilst I was visiting this English exhibition, I saw in my mind the *salon* of our most Parisian of dressmakers at the trying-on hour. It is very simple, decorated in Louis XVI. style, full of pretty French and American women, and as busy as a bee-hive when the workers are preparing something for the queen. Two men, the head of the house and the cutter-out, will perhaps be seated, looking as important and grave as judges, combining toilettes and costumes with some rich customer. Gay chattering is going on in all parts of the room,

and everyone is looking at patterns of material. Through the tube the Baronne C——'s blouse or the Princesse G——'s dress skirt is asked for. The saleswomen—Madame Eugénie and Mademoiselle Louise—are in demand. The tryers-on pass by with the beginnings of dresses. Pretty, well-made Parisiennes, who are acting as dummies, appear and disappear, wearing a visiting dress, or a dinner dress, and it is evident that they enjoy putting on these fine feathers, if only for a time.

All this makes a brilliant and charming scene of frivolous young life. I shook with laughter at the thought of the stir which a fashion for symbolical dresses would cause in the Rue de la Paix. I imagined the dressmaker in question and his collaborator obliged to go in for psychology, to study symbols and to act the part of father confessor to his customers, in order to find out their state of mind and make dresses in accordance. It certainly would be droll.

The performance now came to an end, and when we went away, Mrs. Campbell looked as impressed as though she had just been to a Christian Science meeting.

"Well, is not Lydia a woman of genius?" she asked, when we were in the carriage. I did not answer immediately, and she went on with her praise. "She designs everything, and overlooks everything. She gives *tableaux-vivants* sometimes, with the toilettes suitable for women at every age."

"She certainly has created a sort of new art in clothes, and a very English art," I admitted.

"Her work-girls are all English."

"Yes, that is evident," I replied.

"Is that satirical?"

"Not at all. It is my opinion that the Englishwoman ought to dress in England. She is built differently from us, and does not wear French dresses well. With her elbows out, her big look, and her straight lines, she does not seem right in Parisian toilettes and with Louis XV. heels."

"You are quite right. Our dressmakers are often obliged to make certain changes for us in your fashions."

"As to your Lydia, I think her mingling and shading of

colour, her veiled gold, steel, and jet very artistic. She is a poet, but not a physiologist. She little thinks, probably, how dangerous her symbolical clothes may prove."

"Dangerous?"

"Yes. The woman who is wearing a dress named 'Sweet, Eternal Desire,' might soon be possessed by this 'Sweet, Eternal Desire' with which her husband does not generally inspire her. A 'Vampire' dress may arouse bad or cruel instincts. On the other hand, if the symbols in clothes were beautiful and good ones, they might become the agents of moral and physical health. Science has revealed to us the force and the danger of auto-suggestion."

"I never thought of that," said my friend.

"I should like to re-baptise your 'Silent Appeal' dress," I said, lowering my voice.

Mrs. Campbell blushed. "You are afraid that through its suggestion I might become a flirt?" she said.

"Exactly, and if you will show it to me one of these days, I will find a symbol more worthy of you."

I very nearly said "less immoral," but fortunately the words did not escape my lips.

"Agreed," said Mrs. Campbell; "you shall re-baptise it. What should you say if this fashion of psychical dresses should get to France?"

"I should be delighted. You may be sure that our symbols would be gay and brilliant. A fashion of that kind would be the joy of our humorists. It would probably be exaggerated at first; after that it would be matured, and a very charming *art nouveau* would be evolved which would make our clothes look less commonplace than at present."

"And the first idea of it would have come from us."

"That would not be the first one. Most fashions come from London."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes, certainly. You have given us men's tall hats, women's round hats, coloured stockings and skirts, the tailor-made costume, the short dress, the bolero or Eton jacket, high collars,

pointed shoes and flat heels. About fourteen years ago, I saw the first blouses I had ever seen in Paris. They were white cotton blouses worn with grey skirts. The wearers were unmistakably English women. It was opposite St. Roch's Church, between twelve and one o'clock in the day time. There were very few people in the street. Two workmen going along were struck by the discord, and they hissed. The combination may have been practical, but it was ugly. We have taken up this fashion and made it pretty and elegant. You have the merit of the invention, but we have improved the invention. The divine shuttle is constantly at work beween England and France, and France and England, taking and bringing back elements of progress. Sooner or later, there had to be an understanding between us."

"And it delights me," said Mrs. Campbell. "I can see a great difference in the way in which we are received in Paris now. The very shopkeepers serve us more graciously."

"I can say the same thing. This year I have met with much more kindliness and liking for my nationality among the masses. We all of us have a horrible amount of *chauvinism* at bottom."

As I said this the carriage drew up in front of the house where I was invited to tea. All this had helped me to realise much about French taste. It is distinctly feminine, as clear as our language, and without any mannerism. It possesses the genius of curves, the secret of what is graceful, the intuition of what brings about harmony. These characteristics are all to be found in our art, in our industries, and in our creations. In the very heart of Paris, there is a specially brilliant nucleus composed of the Rue de la Paix, the Place Vendôme, and the Rue de Castiglione. There is nothing like this in all the capitals of Europe. It is there that we find the work of the most skilful hands, the most beautiful and best cut diamonds, the most perfect pearls, the most artistic jewellery, the richest clothes, and the most "chic" hats. All these wonders may not appeal to serious people, but they delight me by their perfection. I see in them a flame from our soul, one of Nature's manifestations. And when I think that all these objects of great luxury are

made by humble people, I look up with deep and affectionate sympathy towards the cells of the hives where the working bees are contributing to the wealth of our country, and keeping up its fine reputation of elegance.

In foreign countries the idea of ugliness or bad taste is never associated with Madame la France. There is plenty of both, nevertheless, with us. In order to be convinced of this, we have only to go to High Mass in provincial towns, to Varnishing Day at the Paris Salons, or to the various lecture rooms. It is not possible for everyone to have rich clothes, but it is possible for all people to attend to their body, and to have well-cut clothes in harmony with their circumstances and with themselves. That is real elegance, and it is within reach of all people. A workman with a clean skin, with his hair and teeth well brushed, with a clean coat and trousers of blue linen, is elegant. A peasant woman in her short skirt and lace cap is elegant. A hat might make her look vulgar and ugly.

Such elegance ought to be general, and it would be if we really loved beauty.

A few years ago, when the waves of that effervescence caused by the English renaissance reached us, we had an attack of acute æstheticism and of *decadentism*, like our neighbours. Influenced by the artistic current coming from the Primitives, the Italian accumulators, we, too, fell in love with the virgins of pure, oval face. We wanted living Botticellis, and they at once sprang up from our wonderful Parisian pavements. We had our æsthetes, and there are some of them still left on the left banks of the Seine and at Montmartre. They are very young, very handsome, and very dark. Nearly all of them belonged to the South of France. They wore their hair long, felt hats with flat brims, neckties with long ends, they did not look very clean, they walked along with a vague expression in their eyes, dreaming unwholesome dreams. With the brush or the pen they went in search of the essence of things. They went very far in their interpretations. I remember coming away from a certain exhibition by these Decadents feeling quite dizzy. I had seen, on canvas and in marble, what had never

been put there before. I had seen there the living soul, smiles that were wicked enough to make anyone shudder. This was an attack of psychical hysteria and not a renaissance. This attack has enlarged our vision without giving us any desire and thirst for Beauty. We are still living on bread. Where and how could we have learned to know and to love Beauty?

Our early childhood was spent in an ordinary, badly ventilated room, in many cases where there was no sun. No one ever thought of surrounding us with pretty things, with graceful forms, and with harmonious colours. No one thought of adorning our nest with flowers and with plants. We were allowed to look at ugly things and we became accustomed to ugliness. In the convents where some children were educated, æsthetics were represented by common imagery, by that gold and silver ironmongery, specimens of which can still be seen in the shop windows near the Church of St. Sulpice, whilst the most lamentable indifference was professed for Nature. We were never taught the laws of hygiene, laws that are so necessary if we are to grow up healthy. Nothing was ever said to us about divine cleanliness, about love and respect of the body, the body which is to serve God, to make life, and which, as Origen says, most scientifically, is the Temple of the Holy Ghost.

Æsthetics are just as much ignored in schools, colleges, and in lay colleges as in convents. There is an intense intellectual culture, but neither the soul nor ideality is developed. The atmosphere in these places is hard and icy-cold. Not a single artistic object is to be found, not one symbol, and not even a flower. An extremely moral and *bourgeois* ugliness reigns supreme.

On leaving the convent or the school our young people have simply learned how to do without hygiene, cleanliness, or beauty.

This, then, is how it comes about that our provincial women do not attempt to enliven their homes with flowers, sunshine, and works of art, and that they do not introduce elegance or comfort into them. This is why they do not pay proper atten-

tion to their bodies, and why their dresses are in bad taste. This is why in Pasteur's own country the laws of hygiene are not observed, and why dirt, tuberculosis, and alcoholism reign supreme. This is why we have pornographic pictures and literature, why the municipal authorities do not understand how to make Paris more salubrious and more beautiful, and this is also why there are certain humiliating and bad-smelling constructions along our boulevards. All these things are connected with each other.

Berlin has no Rue de la Paix, but it no longer has any slums, any centres of infection. The districts where the working classes live, even the very poorest of them, are regular avenues, with wholesome houses on each side, and large yards at the back. Even the humblest lodgings are provided with a bath-room. There is plenty of water, air, and sunshine everywhere, and in the windows and balconies there are flowers and plants. The children grow up healthy and vigorous there, of course. This, then, is how beauty is created.

Æsthetics applied to life would lessen moral and physical ugliness; they would hold disease and even death in check. They would make the cottage as pleasant as the palace and the everyday working livery would be as elegant as the social livery.

In France, we have taste. Nature has even exercised taste in our creation. Ugliness is less ugly in our country than elsewhere. That is not enough, though. Ugliness ought to disappear altogether. We have the intuition of beauty, but that is not enough. We ought to be able to create it around us and out of nothing. Every person cannot feel beauty, but everyone can learn what it is. We must have temples, pulpits, and apostles for teaching it. It will be the religion of the future, the salvation of the world, and our salvation.

London.

I am now "of the family," according to Edith, and a little friendship and protection certainly seems very delightful in this immense London.

Edith and her brother arrived yesterday. Mrs. Nerwind, Ruby, and I went to meet them at Paddington Station. I would not have missed the meeting of the two fiancés upon any account. They had not met since the Barings came into the money that will facilitate their marriage. This meeting was an exquisite fragment of life. A wave of colour came into their faces, they looked into each other's eyes, and they shook hands. It was all over in a moment, but it meant so much. The young man then turned to me and said very warmly and with sincerity that went straight to my heart: "Very glad to see you again."

Mrs. Nerwind and Miss Talbot went direct from Paddington to a reception and Rodney accompanied us to Claridge's Hotel, and took tea with us.

"Oh, it is good to be all together again!" said Edith, when we were seated at one of the tables in the hall.

"I am very glad that I am not the only one who feels that," I observed, smiling.

"We deserted you in the most disgraceful way," said her brother; "and the business affairs connected with wills are always more complicated than people imagine. How have you got on in London?" he asked.

"Oh, very well, indeed! I have been out to luncheon nearly every day. I have also been to matinées, to a concert, to the Academy, and to a polo match at Hurlingham. I have strayed about, here, there, and everywhere."

"Good! And what are your impressions of London?"

"You shall hear all that another time. Tell me now about the Lady of the Manor at Loftshall."

"The Squiress? Oh, well, she gets visibly younger and younger. The keen air suits her admirably. I really do not believe she could have stood Wimbledon much longer. The last two years she had altered very much, and she began to look very pale and very fragile."

"We left her very happy," said Edith. "She had invited her oldest friend to stay with her for a time. They can spin yarns together with their memories of the past, and play cribbage."

"And how is Dick?"

Edith's eyes shone at this question. "He is superb!" she said. "If you could only see the difference in his looks, in the way he holds his head. When we are out together, he opens his nostrils wide, shakes his mane like a young horse, and neighs with joy. I can feel his legs getting firmer and more elastic. The head groom admires him immensely, and treats him like a gentleman. He is one, after all."

"And what about the dogs?"

"They have wild games in the park. The cat has not yet finished smelling all the fresh things around it. It has adopted the library. I suppose its parents must have belonged to learned people, as it certainly likes books."

"Better than its mistress does, perhaps," suggested Rodney wickedly.

"The cat is not obliged to read them."

"Poor St. Olaf!" I said. "I see that even the animals do not look back to it with regret."

"Would you believe that we have three offers for it already?" said Rodney. "In England we are not short of tenants, but of houses."

"You are very lucky," I remarked.

"Lucky? Well, I do not know about that. Our over-population gives us terrible problems to face all the time. It is possible to have too much of a good thing," added the young man, stretching out one of his long arms and helping himself to bread and butter.

"You do not seem to fear having too much of that kind of good thing," remarked Edith, smiling.

"No, for we lunched in a hurry. The Britisher is an animal requiring a great deal of food," answered her brother.

"And there are so many who have not any," remarked Edith.

"Oh, please do not make me feel remorseful," said Rodney.

"I saw some of these unfortunate creatures on Sunday," I said. "Miss Talbot took Mrs. Nerwind and me to a religious service for tramps."

"No!" exclaimed Edith.

I gave an account of our afternoon in Duke Street.

"Pierre de Coulevain on an English platform!" exclaimed Rodney, laughing heartily. "I am sorry I missed that."

"Yes, I must have looked droll there," I admitted; "but if you had been with us you would have seen no one but the young person at the harmonium. She was adorable in her perfect simplicity. Her attitude and her easy manner gave me the impression that she really felt herself the sister of these tramps."

On hearing me speak like this of his fiancée, Rodney coloured with pleasure, crossed his legs, and looked down as though the praise were being given to him. All this delighted me, as it betrayed that instinctive sentiment of possession which love gives.

"You must remember," he said, "that Ruby is the daughter of a social economist. Social questions interest her as much as they do her father. The one difference is that Sir Charles Talbot sees the economical side whilst she sees the humanitarian side."

"There were more than two hundred and fifty tramps at Duke Street," I added.

"Two hundred and fifty," repeated Rodney; "but we have about seventy thousand at least. As to the unemployed, there are some hundreds of thousands."

"This want of work exists everywhere," I said. "It is the inevitable consequence of the state of things created by the fantastic discoveries of the last few years. We ought to admire the fact that greater disasters have not happened than this. The poor inhabitants of this earth have never undergone such a rapid and violent evolution. How the gods have handled this evolution! They had been preparing it for centuries, no doubt. This is how it comes about that men handle colossal forces, the very existence of which they had never suspected, without any fear or apparent effort and almost without any danger. Everything will come right in the end. There will be less waste and less refuse. A time will come when there will not be too many males, and when the ranks

will not be overcrowded. It may be that war and epidemics may cease. Peace is on the way, and health, too. All this requires many generations."

"And in the meantime humanity is suffering."

"It is suffering, but there is no suffering in vain and none unjust. Of that I am convinced."

"I wish I had your faith."

"You are too young for that."

"With our population it will be more difficult to establish the right balance than with you. And to think that France is lamenting over its birth rate. Peop e never know when they are well off."

"But people always know when they are badly off," put in my caustic friend.

Rodney would have continued this conversation, but, as he had finished tea, Edith sent him off unceremoniously.

That evening we all dined together, and I had the pleasure of being the hostess. Our table, decorated with magnificent roses from Loftshall, was one of the most beautiful at Claridge's. Love, friendship, and youth met around it, and this made a very pleasant atmosphere. I enjoyed looking at the characteristic face of Mrs. Nerwind, at Edith, very elegant in her black tulle dress embroidered with jet, at the engaged couple, Rodney a typical Anglo-Saxon, and Ruby in a white Liberty dress trimmed with white silk muslin.

"And so you have had the courage to invite this ever-active young person for a fortnight?" said Rodney seriously to Mrs. Nerwind.

"The courage? Well, you have invited her for life," she replied.

A sudden gentleness came over Rodney's face.

"Yes," he said, "that is true, but then I am used to her ways."

"And she gets used to mine," said Mrs. Nerwind.

"Rodney," interrupted Ruby, "instead of teasing me, tell us about Loftshall. Were you disappointed in it?"

"On the contrary. It is not imposing, but it is hospitable-

looking, *sympathique* as Pierre de Coulevain would say, and it is admirably situated."

"You must not tell them any more about it," put in Edith quickly. "I want it to be a surprise to everyone."

"Is there a ghost?" asked Ruby, her beautiful reddish eyes shining with curiosity.

Rodney laughed.

"Oh, no," he said. "With the exception of a younger son who compromised himself by mixing with politics, the Wilkes men have all been very prosaic squires, mere easy-going, good-natured individuals. Some of them had a certain popularity."

"That will be helpful to you for the elections later on," I said. "I hope that when I come to England again you will invite me to tea on that famous Terrace of the House of Commons."

Rodney blushed like a girl.

"In the meantime," he said, "I know several of my future colleagues who would be delighted to invite you."

"My nephew, George Lester, among others," put in Mrs. Nerwind. "I should only have to send him a line to-night. He is eccentric, but a delightful man."

"Well, then, that is settled," said Rodney. "Mrs. Nerwind will see to the Parliamentary tea. I am at your service for anything you want to see or hear. I am rather late in the day, but there is the theatre, a good piece at the Gaiety, then there are the music halls."

"And the Tower of London and Madame Tussaud's," put in Ruby mischievously.

I caught the look of horror and reproach she had for such suggestions.

"Do not be alarmed," I said to Rodney. "I do not want to see the Tower again, and as to Madame Tussaud's, I went there alone the other day."

"No!"

"Yes, indeed I did. I went there again for the sake of an old memory. On my first visit to England, a very, very long time ago, an Irish officer, who was a friend of my host's, took

me there. I was fascinated by this exhibition, which, in those days, was the only one of the kind. The wax figures made a great impression on me. I had never seen so many together. After I had been there for half an hour, I could not distinguish them from the real persons. They have that effect on me now, and I have a dread of them that I cannot overcome. In the Chamber of Horrors, there was a woman standing on the staircase holding the railing. Captain O'Grady pointed her out to me. 'What number?' I asked him, and just as I was examining the figure, in order to find it, it turned its head. I started back, gave a little cry, and dropped the catalogue. The unlucky person guessed the mistake I had made, and was furious. She moved away quickly, but I heard her say, 'French idiot!' and the words, together with the tone of voice, have always remained in my mind."

"Oh, what a good joke!" exclaimed Rodney, shaking with laughter.

"Yes, my friend was delighted at having taken me in so well. For several days he could never look at me without laughing."

"If you had made this mistake in the room of the royalties the good lady could not have objected," said Mrs. Nerwind; "but it certainly was a little hard on her that it was in the Chamber of Horrors."

"Yes, I took her for a famous prisoner. She was so absolutely motionless. The probability is that she was hypnotised by the faces of all those criminals assembled there. This time I had quite a different impression on visiting Madame Tussaud's show."

"Captain O'Grady was not with you," remarked Rodney.

"And I am no longer only twenty years old," I added. "I was struck by the strangeness of this collection of human facsimiles, ruins, and relics. By gas-light, as I saw them formerly, they produce a certain effect; by daylight they are both lamentable and lugubrious. Kings, queens, heroes, and heroines all appeared to me grotesque. The insignia of royalty, the distinctive signs of our dignitaries all seemed to me childish and ridiculous. And all these men and women had played

great parts! All these flags and decorations had excited envy, ambition, and enthusiasm. I was stupefied by it all. I had a very distinct sensation of the inferiority of the inhabitants of the earth, of the low state of our civilisation, and this sensation was not pleasant. I then looked at the visitors. They all appeared to be more or less impressed by what they saw. Those lifeless faces and things bore the names of the dead persons, and these names acted in a magic way on the minds of the living. I saw eyes fill with tears when they rested on various relics that had belonged to Napoleon I. There was a touching silence around Queen Victoria. Children gazed with respect and admiration at the persons whose history they knew. I remember once, at the Musée Grévin, our waxwork exhibition in Paris, seeing a little girl burst into tears at the farewell scene between Louis XVI. and his family. I understood this time, at Madame Tussaud's, or at least I thought I understood. Nature requires these reproductions. They serve for preserving the thread of the past and for weaving it with that of the present. They cause those sentiments and those impressions which I saw reflected on the various faces; they serve, in fact, for making new life."

"Well!" exclaimed Rodney in an amazed tone, and the next minute he added: "It probably is as you say."

"With that idea in my mind," I went on, "Madame Tussaud's exhibition seemed to me to have such a grandeur about it, that the Roumanian music and the tea there were a sort of profanation."

"I am sorry I was not with you that day," remarked Rodney.

"To be quite frank," I said, "I am glad that you were not. We should have talked all the time. You would probably have played another joke on me, and I should have been no wiser on coming away. In order to understand the meaning of this exhibition it was necessary for me to visit it alone."

"I shall certainly go there one of these days," put in Ruby, "and I shall look at everything through Pierre de Coulevain's spectacles."

"They would be rather too strong for you, Pierre de Coule-

vain's spectacles," said Mrs. Nerwind, not without a touch of irony.

"Alas!" I said, "they are an old woman's spectacles, but things can be seen through them very fairly, I think, and certainly things look very beautiful."

"Your Musée Grévin is very much more elegant and artistic than Madame Tussaud's show," remarked Rodney. "The figures are better made. There is nothing gloomy about the place."

"No, the difference in our genius can be seen in that. We have copied your idea, and we have carried it out in a different spirit."

Just at this moment the guests arrived for a grand dinner that was being given at the restaurant.

The women's hair was bright, smooth, and very neatly done. One of them wore an astonishing cap. The dresses were of rich silk, trimmed with old lace, the jewellery was massive, and there were many enormous bracelets.

Edith's eyes lighted up with mockery, and she said in a low voice to me:

"In a hundred years from now, Madame Tussaud will have one of those specimens as 'A Country Lady of the Twentieth Century.' I shall be like that myself some day."

"Never!" I answered in a convinced tone.

Mrs. Nerwind glanced round the room.

"You could not possibly be in more English and more respectable surroundings," she said to me.

"No," added Edith; "nor in less lively surroundings. I do not know why our respectability is always so gloomy."

"Oh, Claridge's Hotel is not precisely lively, but it is 'so refined,' as American women say. All noise is softened down, the very clock has a religious tone. One does not dare talk in a loud voice. And then just listen to the music! At first I found this hotel most oppressive, but now it rests me delightfully. After wandering about in the warm, noisy London streets, I feel a sudden sense of comfort and an instantaneous restfulness on coming in."

"It is not much frequented by Americans, is it?"

"Only by the better class Americans. Most of them come here to see specimens of the English aristocracy more closely."

"There are a few American women here this evening," said Ruby. "Do you not see how they stand out in this English setting? There is no possibility of mistaking them."

"Thank God, no!" remarked Edith, smiling. "There are two there near the window. The younger one keeps her eyes on our table. Rodney must have made a conquest."

I glanced at the table indicated, and to my surprise saw two of my acquaintances: Mrs. and Miss Reynolds. The latter, on seeing that I had discovered them, gave me a friendly little bow and, putting the tip of her finger to her lips, sent me a kiss.

"I am sorry that is not for me," remarked Rodney, in a low voice.

"Rodney, behave yourself!" exclaimed Ruby with well-feigned severity.

"The daughter has been brought up in Paris," I explained. "She went to America two years ago to come out. I am surprised that she is not married."

"She is charming," pronounced Ruby, "and very well dressed, too."

"I shall be delighted to have a chat with her," I said. "These unexpected meetings are one of the advantages of hotel life. Many people come into your orbit, they disappear, and then appear again. If I had lived shut up in a Paris flat, I should not have met many of the people I know now."

"Yes; but you were destined to meet all of us," remarked Rodney, with an aggravating smile.

"Of course I was, and it is that fact which makes our meeting so interesting. I wonder what is to come of it."

"A great deal of pleasure has come of it in the first place," said Mrs. Nerwind, smiling.

"Yes," I said, "and joy and consolation, too; but Providence generally has another end in view than that of merely giving us pleasure or pain, happiness or grief. Providence is always pursuing its ends."

"Oh, I know what it was," put in Ruby. "You were destined to work for the conversion of Rodney and to make a Francophile of him."

"Ah, you are getting warm, perhaps," I said. "At any rate, I hope that the conversion is well on its way."

"Yes, indeed it is!" answered the young man, in a serious manner that delighted me.

The conversation continued in a lively, animated way. I was again struck with Ruby's brilliant intellect and with her elevated mind. Several times I saw Edith look at the engaged couple with an expression which was a mixture of gentleness, curiosity, sadness, and wistfulness. For the hundredth time I wondered how it was that she was not married. Yes, Providence certainly does pursue its ends—for and against us. What does it matter, though, since we are working with Providence?

After dinner, we took our coffee in the hall. As soon as I saw my American friends leaving the restaurant, I went forward to meet them with outstretched hands.

"I am so delighted to meet you again," said Mrs. Reynolds warmly.

"What luck to find you here, Pierre de Coulevain," exclaimed my young friend. "And to think that it was I who wanted to come to this hotel!"

I took my two friends to a corner opposite the party I had just left.

"How is it you are not married, Gladys?" I asked. "After the accounts in the New York papers of your brilliant coming out, I expected to hear of your engagement before the end of the season."

"Ah, well, you see, American men are afraid of girls brought up in Europe, and the girls brought up in Europe find American men insufficient."

"It is a very silly thing to transplant children," owned Mrs. Reynolds. "I realise that at present."

"You are quite right, and I keep saying so to your countrywomen. The result is that they are out of their element after-

wards and there is nothing that is worse, unless it is to be in the class to which one is not accustomed."

"Mother has a holy fear of having me on her hands for life."

"You will have to marry a European—a Frenchman, for instance."

"Oh, no; a woman's life is too narrow in your country. I used to hear stories among the French girls which edified me on that subject. But there, that is enough about all that. How long have you been in London?"

"About three weeks. Before that I spent a month in the country with my friends, the Barings."

"The Barings of Wimbledon?" asked Gladys, in amazement.

"Yes; or rather the Barings of Loftshall, now. They have come into their family property."

"Well, that is extraordinary! I know Jack Baring. I spent two months at Montreal this winter with my half-sister who is married and living there. We were in the same set, and we skated and danced a great deal together——"

"And flirted?" I put in.

"Yes, we had a very good time. He is a regular Englishman, a splendid fellow."

"Well, then, opposite to you are his sister and brother."

"Oh!" exclaimed Gladys excitedly. "Is that beautiful woman in black his sister?"

"Yes, and the girl is Miss Talbot, who is engaged to his brother."

"They are both very English."

"Yes; but charming Englishwomen I can assure you. Jack Baring is on the way home. He will arrive next week."

A wave of emotion coloured the girl's cheeks.

"How curious!" she said in a low voice.

"Have you friends in London?" I asked Mrs. Reynolds.

"Heaps," she replied. "And so many invitations that we do not know which to accept."

"You have come late, the season is nearly over."

"My mother has been very ill, so that we could not get away before," replied Mrs. Reynolds. "We are only staying a week

here, and then we go to Scotland, to Invernesshire, where we shall spend August and September. Some friends of ours have bought a place there."

We exchanged news about some mutual acquaintances, and then I rose to return to my other friends.

"I must leave you now," I said, "as I am hostess to-night. We shall meet again to-morrow, as you are staying here."

"Oh, yes," answered Gladys, joyfully. "I have so many things to tell you."

On returning to the others I said: "Guess what I have just heard."

All of them looked at me with a questioning expression in their eyes.

"Miss Reynolds knows a young Englishman named Jack Baring."

"Oh!"

"No!"

"Is it possible!"

All these exclamations were uttered together.

"Yes, she danced, skated, and flirted with him this winter, in Montreal."

"What an extraordinary coincidence!" exclaimed Rodney.

"Still more extraordinary ones are happening every second," I said. "You do not notice them or you attribute them to luck. They are the result of wonderful providential work. One has to be a novelist, that is, a weaver, in order to admire and to understand things."

"And Jack is, perhaps, in love with this girl," suggested Ruby, looking very animated. "Why, that is perhaps the reason of his enthusiastic admiration for American women."

"I should not be surprised," I said. "Look how pretty she is, with her dark hair, white complexion, and light blue eyes with dark lashes."

"Oh, Pierre de Coulevain, please do not give me an American sister-in-law," pleaded Edith, with comic fright.

"What have they done to you?" asked Mrs. Nerwind.

"To me—nothing," answered Edith, somewhat haughtily.

"I do not fancy an Englishman would be very happy though, with a wife who would leave him for the sake of running round the world."

"Miss Reynolds would not leave her husband, I am sure of that," I said. "For three months I saw a great deal of her. We were next door to each other in the same hotel, and nearly every day she came to my room for a talk. She has a very noble conception of life, and she is thoroughly good."

"No matter, promise me that you will not lift a finger to bring about this Anglo-American marriage. I should not like anything disagreeable to come about through you," she added, laying her hand on mine.

"But I shall be quite remorseful if you talk like that," I said with feigned seriousness. "Remember that I persuaded you to come here. Your brother is sure to come here to see you. He will meet Miss Reynolds and renew his acquaintance with her. We had better go to another hotel. It would certainly be more prudent. Shall we go to the Savoy?"

"What nonsense. You are making fun of me now."

"We might send Jack straight to Loftshall," suggested Rodney.

"Yes; but the young person is going to Scotland for two months."

"No!—Oh, well, then, it is all up!"

"And to think, Edith, that you arranged the trip to Scotland for your brother!" I said.

My friend looked so aghast that we all laughed heartily.

"Oh, you are all detestable!" she exclaimed, partly annoyed and partly amused by the irony of things.

"Do not trouble yourself," put in Mrs. Nerwind. "Marriages are foreordained in Heaven—or somewhere else. This is an acknowledged thing, and I believe it."

"Well, I only hope that this one is not foreordained anywhere," said Edith.

"Go on hoping," we said in a chorus.

"I should not be sorry to have such a pretty sister-in-law," remarked Rodney, glancing at the American girl.

Mrs. Nerwind now rose, to take her departure, and we separated.

I wondered whether I had been sent to Claridge's Hotel to bring about this meeting between Jack Baring and Gladys Reynolds. Why not? I am serving!

London.

Whenever I happen to notice how circumstances help me in my work, it gives me the same little thrill of awe that anything miraculous or inexplicable gives. All writers, poets, painters, and musicians are helped in this way. Providence supplies them with the materials and they, with much difficulty, have to put them together, in order to produce the work intended.

Yesterday I was at an Anglo-American luncheon party, and I then went to tea to Mr. Punch's, the great English satirist. This latter piece of good luck was totally unexpected.

Luncheon in the country, in England, is generally rather a dull meal. In London, though, I find it very amusing. Like the Americans, those terribly business-like women, English women wear their hats and all these flowers and feathers have a pretty effect round the table. With their hats on, women always seem to have something of outdoor life and air about them, something of the excitement caused by the people they have met during the morning, the trying on of their clothes, the visits to their milliners and dressmakers. Without their hats, their faces would certainly be less animated. Oh, what an influence things have, and who would ever venture to study that influence thoroughly? Men are more brilliant and *fresher* at this mid-day meal; unexpected guests arrive and chairs and plates are put closer together, in order to make room for them. All this creates an exhilarating atmosphere, which is favourable to conversation.

Mrs. Leslie, the hostess of yesterday's luncheon-party, is a delightful woman who is still young. She belongs to what we should call the upper middle-class. There is a vein of idealism and of poetry in her composition which lights up her eyes. It

is easy to see from the pictures by great masters and the drawings on the walls, by the magnificent Broadwood and the scores on the piano, that painting and music have ardent admirers under that roof. The windows of the large drawing-room open on to a flower-bedecked terrace, and look on to a wild part of Hyde Park.

I arrived in good time, but there were three pretty women already there—two Americans, whom I knew, and a delicate-looking Englishwoman, who, as I soon learnt, was only just about again after an illness.

"You were not fit to go to the Auteuil races," said Mrs. Leslie to her. "It was very imprudent."

"I know; but Frank speaks French so abominably that he does not like to go to Paris alone. He would have been very vexed if I could not have gone with him. Ten times a day he came and sat down at the end of my sofa, looking wretched and saying that he hoped I should be all right for the Auteuil races. I was not all right, but I went all the same, and then as soon as I came back I was ill in bed again. Oh, men are selfish brutes!" added Mrs. Bryce, with a smile that softened the severity of the judgment.

"You should not let them be brutes, nor even selfish," exclaimed one of the two American women, drawing herself up and clenching the arms of her chair, her whole attitude suggestive of revolt. "When I only have a headache, the whole house is silent. My husband walks on tiptoe and scarcely dares to breathe. Fancy risking one's health and perhaps losing one's beauty for the sake of sparing one's husband a disappointment. Oh no, never!"

This tirade was accompanied by a movement of the head which made me laugh heartily.

"Oh, that picture hat protesting against conjugal tyranny!" I said, in reply to the questioning look turned on me. "The effect is most comic, it would tempt the pen of your *Punch*."

"Well, you shall tell him about it, if you like," said my hostess, smiling. "I intend taking you to see him this afternoon."

"On the top of the hill," repeated the painter; "but it would be horribly difficult to hold up there. You see, there is no table-land at the top."

"Science has begun to carve out the beginning of one. It is getting wider every day, and it will be so constructed that the descent will be less rapid."

"I am very glad to hear all this!" exclaimed Mr. Bryce gaily. "Good old *savants*, and I had always thought them such bores. Lily, we will invite some of them to dinner from time to time now. You go on this system, no doubt," continued the "selfish brute," turning to Mrs. Burton.

"As much as possible. You see, I am *en route* now with my mother and sister, simply for the sake of freshening myself up. I shall spend the summer in Switzerland, and then winter in Algeria and in Tunis, two countries that I do not know at all."

"And what about Mr. Burton?" asked Sir Gerald, with intentional wickedness.

"Oh, he is very well and very happy."

Everyone laughed at this reply.

"Happy away from you!" persisted Sir Gerald. "That surprises me."

"Of course he would like to be with me, and he would have come if I had asked him, but his presence is necessary to some hundreds of individuals, so that it would not have been reasonable. He is not free, you see, as I am."

"Free!—A married woman!" exclaimed our hostess.

"Oh, I know that in England a married woman is only a half. In America she is a whole."

This speech caused a fresh burst of laughter.

"Excuse me," remarked Mr. Bryce, "but you are in flagrant opposition with the Bible."

"The Bible was written by Oriental poets."

A curious silence followed these words. The faces of the Englishwomen became frigid at once, and Sir Gerald coughed in an amusing way.

"My husband cannot go to Tunis and Algeria," continued Mrs. Burton, not noticing the disastrous effects of her heresy;

"but that is no reason why I should be deprived of such an advantage. It would be too much if both husband and wife were unable to educate themselves in this way. Then, too, our men are the best creatures in the world. They are not at all selfish. They have no time to be selfish, even."

"There!" exclaimed the Colonel. "You do not even give them the credit for their virtues."

"Unfortunately," said Mrs. Bryce, "an English or French-woman could not leave her husband in this way, as she would not enjoy anything without him. It is stupid, I own."

"No; but it is a pity," remarked Mrs. Burton, with perfect good faith.

The novelist, who was inwardly enjoying this as much as I was, had listened quietly. A gleam of mischief now came into his eyes. "Have you ever read the memoirs of your namesake, Lady Burton?" he asked the American woman.

"No; are they interesting?"

"Extremely interesting. Read them and you will see how an Englishwoman understands conjugal love. Lady Burton shared her husband's adventurous life from the beginning to the end. She defended him like a lioness, living and dead. She went with him everywhere that his romantic and morbid fancy took him. 'Pay, pack, and come with me,' were his orders, and for years she obeyed without a murmur. She tells of her anguish when, towards evening in Syria, she was waiting inside the tent for his return. She describes her joy when she heard the sound of the bells on his camel. Later on, when she felt her end approaching, she wrote simply: 'I have heard his camel's bells.'"

"And I have seen them, those bells!" I exclaimed. "They are placed in the tent-shaped chapel, under which they are both at rest now. During his lifetime when mass was celebrated there, those bells were rung for the elevation of the Host, and I can imagine the emotion of the widow on hearing them. When I was staying at Wimbledon I went on a pilgrimage to Mortlake cemetery. I had a long talk with the gate-keeper. He told me that Lady Burton used to spend whole afternoons

there at her husband's grave, and he added: 'She was very fond of him.'"

I was glad to see some emotion on Mrs. Burton's face and her eyes fill with tears.

"Well," said Mr. O'Mara, "I wonder whether a woman is happier with voluntary slavery or with absolute independence. Will you give me your opinion, ladies?"

The English and American women looked at each other in an embarrassed way, and the men awaited the verdict with eager curiosity.

"There is certainly more happiness in the voluntary slavery," declared Mrs. Leslie.

"Oh, yes, certainly," affirmed her compatriots with a warmth that appeared to me somewhat affected.

The novelist was watching Mrs. Burton. She was knitting her eyebrows as though the question needed some little thought.

"More happiness," she said at last, her face brightening again; "yes, that is possible, but at the same time there is less dignity. I fancy, too, that these big sentiments are not allowed *us*. They would hinder our progress and, you know, we have to hold the record for progress," she added, with a brilliant smile. "If, like certain Englishwomen, I had not been able to part from my husband, I should neither know Spain nor Italy, my house would not be full of pretty things, and I should never have had the idea of commencing a collection."

"A collection of what?" asked the painter eagerly.

"Guess!"

"Spoons," suggested an Englishwoman wickedly.

"Cradles," answered Mrs. Burton, her voice unconsciously taking another tone.

"Oh, that is a pretty idea!" exclaimed Mrs. Leslie.

"It occurred to me that it would be interesting to make a collection of the various nests mankind has prepared for his little ones. I have a great many already. My husband has had a room built specially for them in our country house. Later on, I shall give them to some museum, so you see that I am working, too, for my country."

"What you say is quite right and very philosophical," I remarked, delighted with her intuition. "Whilst your men are chained to their counters, their manufactories, or their laboratories, you are urged to leave your country. Providence makes use of you, for operating the exchanges between the New World and the Old World. It sends you here to put you in contact with our accumulators of art and of memories. Ever since I have begun to understand the rôle of American women, I never joke them about their wandering fits, and I no longer blame them for leaving their homes. I pity them for being obliged to do so."

Mrs. Burton's face had first expressed surprise, but it now shone with delight.

"Pierre de Coulevain," she exclaimed, "if I were sitting next you I should kiss you. I have had a vague feeling of just what you say, and now you have put it quite clearly for me. Yes, that is it, we are sent here."

"Oh, there is no doubt about that," added Miss Langdorff. "Every day, mother wonders how we could have left our beautiful country house to come and shut ourselves up in hotel rooms. It seems to her now absolute madness, and yet it was she herself who proposed the journey to Algeria and Tunis for this winter. She was seized with curiosity to see the Arabs. We certainly left home six months earlier than necessary, as I wanted to spend a few weeks in London during the season, and then to see Switzerland, so here we are!"

"Yes; and you are working at the creation of that invisible cable, much the more important one, by the way, with which Nature is uniting the two worlds and bringing them nearer and nearer together. Europe is beginning to return America's calls."

"I hope Europe may get some profit out of its journeys, too," remarked Mrs. Burton, with patriotic pride.

"Mr. Seymore, when are you coming to America to paint us?" asked Miss Langdorff. "Is your brush only to be used in the service of great ladies?"

This irony evidently wounded the delicate susceptibility of the artist.

"No, my brush is at the service of Beauty," he replied, with marked coldness.

"Oh well, then, without any modesty, I think I may say that you will find some of that on the other side of the ocean."

"I am so convinced of that, that I intend spending a year in the United States."

"Oh, what good news!"

Thanks to the way in which she uttered these words, it was very evident that Mr. Seymore forgave her.

"Our American artists have an immense amount of talent, but they are too much of impressionists," she continued.

The novelist laughed.

"Women only understand the picture," he said. "When they order their portrait they really want a picture."

"It seems to me," remarked our hostess, timidly, "that a good portrait is always a picture, but that a picture is never a portrait."

"That is perfectly true," said the artist, with a pleased look. "The portrait Whistler did of his mother is a picture. Certain painters never get a satisfactory likeness, because they cannot come out of themselves enough. They always give to their subjects something of their own dream. I knew one painter who, when he was in love himself, put love into the eyes of everyone he painted."

"Does the exact reproduction of the features of a face suffice for giving the likeness?" I asked.

"No, certainly not."

"Well, then, how do you get it?"

"The reflection of the life, of the soul of the model makes an impression in the artist's brain, no doubt, and the brain then guides the hand. That is how I understand it. When the miracle is accomplished I have sometimes started with surprise on seeing it."

"Yes, it is like that," murmured the novelist, and I repeated inwardly: "Yes, it is indeed."

"Mr. Seymore," said Mrs. Burton, "do you not think that large hats are artistic? We have brought them into fashion again, and Pierre de Coulevain thinks they are comic."

"Excuse me," I interrupted, "when they are still, on canvas, they are adorable, but when they are arguing, they are most droll."

"Pierre de Coulevain is right," he answered, smiling. "They really are picture hats, as you yourselves call them."

"The eighteenth-century women wore them though, constantly."

"The eighteenth-century women did not live in such a constant state of agitation as those of the twentieth century," answered Mr. O'Mara.

"And they did not wear them to preach rebellion against their husbands," I said, looking at Mrs. Leslie.

"No, they had not been spoilt by bad examples," put in Mr. Bryce, with a tantalising smile at the two American women.

"Have you seen our Salons this year, Mr. Seymore?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied.

"And what impression did you have?"

"The impression I always have of amazement at the immense and varied effort which they represent."

"You do not think that the standard of art is getting lower with us?"

"No, I do not; I think it has remained stationary for some years. The amount of talent is not less, but it is divided among a greater number of brushes. It seems as though the gods themselves have become democratic and favour the masses rather than the minority. However that may be, France and Germany are the only two nations doing big painting and sculpture. Our Academy must seem to you like an exhibition of work by dilettantes."

"No, it does not. It reveals the love of Nature and of Beauty. You are more particularly portrait and landscape painters. There is poetry in your works and in ours there is ideality."

"Quite true," murmured the painter.

"Your Academy always leaves me with a pleasant impression, an impression of green colour. Our Salon leaves me with a strong impression, an impression of violent colours, of red and of yellow. What does surprise me, though, is the disproportion

between the immensity of your metropolis and the smallness of your National Gallery."

I regretted my words when I saw the flush that came into the artist's face.

"Yes," he said, "such disproportion does strike one. London has more private collections, I fancy, than Paris. It has more Art Exhibitions, but they are not accessible to the public like those of your Louvre, and consequently the people's eyes and taste cannot be formed."

"Art is only for the few with you, it is for an aristocracy. On the other hand, you have your British Museum and your Kensington Museum. The accumulators, I mean the collections necessary to the genius of your race and to its mission in the world, are to be found there."

"Perhaps so," he replied thoughtfully.

"Last year," put in Mr. O'Mara, "in your Grand Palais of the Champs Elysées, I saw the Concours Hippique, your Salons of Painting and Sculpture, and then the Automobile Exhibition. All these exhibitions in the same building gave me a striking impression of your vitality."

"I am glad that you have felt that," I answered. "Now that after so many centuries we have agreed to sink our prejudices, we shall gradually discover our respective merits. It will be more agreeable and more intelligent than to spend our time slandering each other."

"Right!" exclaimed Sir Gerald Lewis with a smile.

The conversation soon turned on current topics. Thanks to the American women, it was gay and animated and we continued talking afterwards in the drawing-room until four o'clock. Mrs. Leslie was obliged to tell her guests of our appointment with *Punch* and to send them away.

When Mrs. Burton was leaving, she said to me quietly:

"Promise me not to talk of picture hats to that awful man."

"I promise," I replied, just as seriously.

Half an hour later we reached Bouverie Street. The celebrated English satirist might have a more luxurious abode for himself and his hump, his bells, his pen, and his brushes, but

I suppose he likes his old surroundings. The London atmosphere has given a rich grey coating, mixed with yellow and black, to these surroundings, and everything I saw interested me immensely. I went all over the house. In the basement are the presses; on the first floor the offices, on the second the workshops for the binding, and on the third floor, where there is more light, the type-setters work.

I understand at present what printing really is, and all the machinery of it makes a great impression on me. All the tools which serve to spread abroad, to transmit the invisible, the intangible—the mind of man—seem sacred to me. When a little thought enters the human eye, this becomes a microscope.

In *Punch's* house I felt that there was well-regulated activity. It is incessant activity, yet everything is quite tranquil. When we went into the various workshops, there was no sign of curiosity. A set look came on to all the faces immediately. This is one of the effects of English discipline. The women who were binding simply continued their work, so that we only saw their lowered eyelids. In a workshop of this kind in France, all eyes would have been turned on us and we should not only have had looks, but smiles. Mrs. Leslie spoke kindly to two of the workgirls, and asked about their family. Their expression did not alter. They replied with that air of hostile pride, which always astonishes me, and which appears to be peculiar to servants and to the workpeople of this country.

As we were going away the doors opened and some boys came in, bringing brown teapots and cups. There was at once a more joyful look on all faces, and everyone appeared more at home in the workshop. I was glad to see this.

"We will follow their good example," said our host, taking us into Mr. Punch's dining-room, in which there was no attempt at anything artistic. One of the members of the staff was waiting for us there. He was a man of medium height and, in his face, there was that expression of spirituality which I always notice in intellectual Englishmen. His blue eyes were the eyes of a poet and a dreamer. His delicate, nervous lips were the lips of a satirist.

A large tray was brought in with tea, cake, and sandwiches, and Mrs. Leslie at once began to pour out.

"With Mr. Punch's compliments," she said, as she offered me a cup.

"Many thanks to Mr. Punch," I replied. "Although I am one of his most constant readers, I little thought to be invited to tea by him."

"It is your reward," put in Mr. M——.

"Oh, there is no credit due to me for reading *Punch*, as I enjoy humour and think he is delightful."

"I am surprised that a foreigner should appreciate it, and a woman, too, for women have not generally a sense of humour."

"Well, I fancy that I have that sense, and I am thankful. It has been a most valuable source of amusement in my life, and it is not yet dried up. Caricatures and humorous sketches are my delight. I have a whole collection of them at the back of my forehead, and when one or the other of them happens to appear, I sometimes laugh aloud, alone in my room. In your last number, for instance, there was one that I shall never forget: a working man pointing out to his companion two Eton boys in their tall hats. 'Look, 'Arry,' he is saying, 'they've put the chimney pot on before the house is built!' His remark, caused by the want of proportion in a man's hat on a child's head, seemed to me most humorous."

"Yes, that is just it. Common sense is the mother of humour."

"That is why it is so rare in women," added Mr. Leslie.

"Fred," protested his wife, "do not be so impertinent."

"How do you define the difference between humour and wit?" asked Mr. M——.

"Humour is a faculty of the intellect, by means of which we see the incongruousness of things and events, whilst wit is a faculty of the imagination, which enables us to see their concordance, their brilliant side, and all that is surprising."

"Your definition is a good one."

"Humour is Anglo-Saxon and wit is Latin," I continued. "In the Parisian press, we only have two humorists, but they

are both very strong and endowed with brilliant common sense. The one who writes in my newspaper is my daily delight. I always read what he has to say first. The first thing that comes from his pen is either an idiotic prejudice of ours, a ridiculous belief, or a political stupidity. As soon as it has its head well out, he looks at it for a second and then all at once he comes down on it and crushes it completely in a single sentence or a paragraph. I have not seen him at work, but I am sure it must be done like that. That is French humour. I will send you a specimen of it."

"I fancy we were before you as regards caricatures," said Mr. Leslie.

"Yes, with Hogarth, Rowlandson, and Gillray, but we have had Isabey and Carle Vernet, and since then the army of satirists has increased on both sides of the Channel. They have now acquired a marvellous power of expression. There is no need now of a little scroll of explanations, is there? They still put that in America, and it has a droll effect now. *Punch* can do without it. The expressions, the attitudes, the very garments of his personages are living, and they speak. That is how it is that they stamp themselves so easily on the brain. Your artists seize the pompous gestures of the *bourgeois* in the most admirable way, and also the simple astonishment and the vacant stare of your lower classes. Your street scenes are pictures. Formerly, I could only understand *Punch's* drawing, but now I am sufficiently well up in your politics and your life generally to appreciate him thoroughly. In the midst of all his comic charivari, the pages he devotes to children are delightful and most refreshing. It is very philosophical, too, to show up the characteristics of the human plant in the young shoots. When the faults are only six, eight, or ten years old they are charming."

"Yes, but their growth must be checked."

"Or rather trained and guided, as they are forces, too. Your Tom Browne had no idea how much pleasure he gave me with his little people. Altogether, I fancy I comprehend *Punch* fairly well now."

"May I know just what you think of him?" asked Mr. Leslie.

"In the first place he is a gentleman."

My interlocutor bowed.

"One of the incarnations of John Bull, a very *chauvin* and very loyal Britisher with or without conviction. He is a University man, a lettered man, he believes in the classics for the mind and the horsewhip for the body. He has a good vein of humaneness and of kindliness. He has, too, a very juvenile almost boyish side to him. He has a weakness for children, animals, and all who suffer. As to woman——"

Everyone present looked at me inquisitively. I stopped for a second and then continued:

"He considers her necessary, if not indispensable. He still looks upon her as 'the sex.' He does not take her seriously——"

"Ah, there you are mistaken," said my host, laughing heartily.

"No, it is absolutely true," said Mrs. Leslie.

"No matter, he loves her, as a student might, simply but ardently."

"It seems to me that the satirist is being satirised," put in Mr. M——.

"I have also discovered in *Punch* something that would have astonished me very much if I had not known the English soul," I went on. "That something is spirituality. We certainly should not find that in our humorous papers. In one of your numbers, there was a poem of the most elevated kind, almost metaphysical. It was an 'In Memoriam.'"

To my great consternation I saw Mr. M—— turn very red.

"There is the poet," remarked Mr. Leslie, pointing to his friend.

"I am delighted," I said gaily. "The poem was only signed with initials, so that you have heard my praise in a very blunt way; but, at any rate, you cannot doubt my sincerity."

The poet bowed his thanks and I went on with my criticism.

"The only thing that puzzles me is," I said, "that I cannot make out whether *Punch* is a Liberal or a Conservative."

My host's face lighted up with pleasure.

"I must tell the editor that," he said. "He will be de-

lighted. His idea is that politics belong to *Punch* and not *Punch* to politics. He must be free always to choose the event that lends itself best to humour and to satire."

"How many collaborators are there for the production of *Punch?*" I asked.

"Thirteen. Every Wednesday evening some part of the number that will appear the following week is talked over round this table. The owners of the paper invite what we call the 'esoteric staff' to dinner. *Punch's* dinner is an institution. In the early days the dinner consisted of roast beef and pickles, cheese and stout. At present it is sent in from a restaurant. We have a French *menu* and champagne. The Editor is at one end of the table and one of the proprietors at the other end. After dinner the principal cartoon and the *leit motiv* of the number are discussed. The former must always be political, the second may be a current topic. The opinion of the majority is taken and then the details are arranged. Written instructions are then given to the two artists by the editor. The drawings must be finished and sent to the engraver by Friday, on the afternoon of which day the paper goes to press. Sometimes *Punch* is all settled very quickly. At other times we cannot come to an agreement and we spend a long time discussing it."

"You cannot imagine how much I should like France to have a humorous paper, an independent, straightforward, clean one, in which French wit could wield its pen and pencil."

"Would a humorous paper with you submit to being—*convenable?*"

"Its proprietors and its manager would have to insist on this, and there would have to be a strict board of inspection, like the one that meets round this table. What a force such a paper might be. The drawings by Forain, Gillaume, Caran d'Ache and Henriot, which are published here and there, are all lost afterwards and it is a great pity. In a horrible paper that I once saw there was an admirable satire. The drawing represented a huge door on which was written in large letters: 'The Children's Refuge.' There was an enormous bell-knob to the door. There was a terrible snowstorm,

and two little children of six or eight years of age were making desperate efforts to ring the bell. They could not possibly reach it, as it was placed too high for them. There was fine humour in that picture and such truth in it that the tears started to my eyes. No epoch has furnished such subjects for satire as ours, because ours is an epoch of transition. With us in France the incongruities of politics, of our famous Code, of our constitution and of social life would supply such a paper with enough aliments. The pornographs can no longer find anything new in the rubbish heaps they have been turning over for so long. They are beginning to come back with empty shovels. Ah, that would make a subject for a sketch," I said, breaking off.

"Why, yes," remarked my host, laughing.

"Pornography has the same effect on the human race as cognac has on puppies. It stops the growth and takes the nature out of it. We are beginning to discover this in France and a few courageous people are starting a movement against it."

The poet's face lighted up with pleasure.

"Only the Francophobes will regret that," he said.

While we were finishing tea, Mr. Leslie brought me the first number of *Punch*, dated 1841, and the latest number dated for that week.

"It is a very modest-looking number," I said, examining the ancestor.

"Yes, it was not at all sure of continuing the following week."

"And how old is it at present?"

"Over sixty."

"It was hard, ugly, and forbidding like its epoch, the Victorian era," I said, turning to the current number. "Ah, this one is better, clearer-looking, and more congenial. It shows immense progress. There is no mistake about it, whatever people may say, we are on our way towards the light."

"That is our *raison d'être*," put in Mr. M—— quietly.

"I have praised Mr. Punch enough, have I not, to have the right now to find fault with him?" I asked.

"You would have that right, even if you had not praised him," said Mr. Leslie. "What do you blame him for?"

"For the advertisements in which he frames his paper."

My host coloured slightly.

"Oh, yes, we agree," he began, "but business——"

"But art," I interrupted, "the joy of the eyes. Your cover is very artistic with *Punch* facing the British lion, and the pathetic-looking dog with the feather, so dear to the East End, in its cap, and with that exquisite series of little elves and symbolical personages coming out of the horns of plenty. All that is spoiled by the 'Three Star Cognac,' and the 'Rigollot Paper.'"

"Are not the curtains of most of your Parisian theatres covered with advertisements?"

"Yes, it is a shame."

"They probably pay their artists well, as we do, and they are obliged to accept the means for the sake of the end in view."

"I sincerely hope that the day may come when beauty may be taken into account even in business."

"Amen," added the poet.

Mr. Leslie raised the green cloth on *Punch's* famous committee table, and I saw that it was covered with letters cut into it.

"We have the initials of many celebrated men there," he said, with a certain pride. "There are the initials of the various editors and of some of our collaborators. W. M. T., those are Thackeray's initials; D. M., George du Maurier; P. M., Phil May!"

"Oh, poor Phil May," I said, touching with my finger the hieroglyphics that his knife had cut in the table. "He was a great artist, was he not? I used to look forward every year to his comic Annual. Every one of his figures was a poem. No one ever drew wretched people and silly people as he did. I remember numbers of his drawings—and they touch me or make me laugh still."

There was an expression of surprise on the poet's face as I said this.

"It is extraordinary that a foreigner should enter into our spirit so thoroughly," he said.

"Providence undertook my education," I answered. "I was brought to England, over and over again, and by people in different stations of life. On the Continent, too, I have met many of your country-people. For years, without being aware of it myself, I have been receiving impressions from the Anglo-Saxon soul. You see, I was also destined to taste Mr. Punch's tea. That was an agreeable surprise for me."

"Will you keep to-day's number as a souvenir?" asked my host. Soon after this Mrs. Leslie and I left and drove back along the Embankment to our hotel.

I had telephoned to Edith, in order to let her know what was keeping me all afternoon. At dinner time, I told her about my visit to Bouverie Street, and our conversation then turned on humour, wit, and satire.

"According to you," said Edith, "we are not responsible for things and events. Why should Nature raise up critics of her deeds?"

"Because," I replied, "there are forces in Nature which produce disease, and other forces which produce the remedy and the physician. All this is necessary in the struggle for what is good and for what is beautiful which is always going on in the Universe to which we belong."

"If you are not satisfied," said Rodney, his eyes lighting up with mockery, "it is not the fault of Pierre de Coulevain's imagination."

"Oh, no," replied Edith, with a pathetic little smile, "it is the fault of my own stupidity."

London.

I have at last the thread of this romance that I have felt all the time floating through the life of Miss Baring. Yesterday, just when I was thinking least about it, it was put into my fingers. And, without knowing it, I was entangled by it. Our meeting at Monte Carlo was part of it! I feel an inward satisfaction, a kind of triumph, every time that I can recognise in coincidence something due to deliberate will and intention instead of to chance.

According to her promise, Mrs. Nerwind had informed her nephew that he was expected to invite her and four other persons, including a French lady, to tea at the House of Commons. The nephew replied at once by a very cordial invitation for yesterday afternoon.

Mr. George Lester was waiting for us on the famous terrace. He welcomed us with that warmth due to the instinct of hospitality peculiar to the Englishman. He is a man of about forty, with large features, an energetic expression, and the robust physique of a country gentleman. He took us to a table decorated with flowers and laden with magnificent fruit, with sandwiches and cakes.

"Mr. Lester," I said, as I took my seat, "I am rather ashamed of my indiscretion. It was to please me that Mrs. Nerwind asked for this invitation."

"It was, I hope, too, by way of giving me pleasure," he replied.

"Bravo, George! For a Liberal and a bear that really is not bad."

This outburst made us all laugh, and the terrible aunt continued:

"Yes, out of eighteen nephews, there are two who have gone wrong: this one who has turned Whig, and the other one is a Christian Socialist."

"What may that be?" I asked.

"I have never been able to find out," she replied. "He wears sackcloth like a monk and he cleans the doorstep himself, probably leaving the inside of the house to be cleaned by his servant."

"Oh, Mrs. Nerwind, you are too severe!" exclaimed Edith, laughing.

"She has no respect for anything," put in Mr. Lester, good-humouredly. "Anyhow, Madame," he continued, turning to me, "you know what to think of me."

"I am not disagreeably impressed, I assure you," I said. "A gentleman who is a Liberal and a bear promises originality."

"And, too, a bear who offers us flowers, fruit, and cakes is rather nice," added Ruby.

The tea was brought, and Mr. Lester asked Miss Baring to do the honours.

"Do you like your new house?" he asked her.

"Very much. I have always been a country mouse rather than a city mouse."

"The presence of you and your mother at Loftshall must make a great change there, for you succeed two dynasties of old bachelors."

"Yes, and consequently we are short of numbers of things. That is why I was obliged to come to London."

"You have one of the best hunting stables and one of the best packs of hounds in England quite close to you," observed Mr. Lester to Rodney.

"Yes, so it appears," replied the latter.

"One of these days, Sir Bernard will give you his seat, will he not?"

"A Liberal candidate may carry it off."

"We are not strong there."

"I hope that your party, Mr. Lester," I said, "will not interfere with the good understanding with France that the Tories brought about."

"It certainly will not," he replied. "The Liberals are as capable as the Tories of seeing the necessity and the advantage of it. Do you know who was really the promoter of it?"

"The late King."

"Yes. He always had a marked liking for your country."

"Oh, well, I do not think he was only guided by his personal liking, or even by the wish of facilitating his journeys to Paris, his visits to the smaller theatres, and the meeting with his friends of yore, who are all more or less grandmothers now. No, as Prince of Wales he learnt very many things without being aware that he was learning and those things were useful afterwards for the King. He realised, for instance, that England and France were not intended to injure each other, but on the other hand to complete each other, and to help, by their mutual

agreement, in the maintenance of peace. That is, I fancy, what more particularly guided his policy, provided so Constitutional a King had a policy. No one is more delighted than I am to see the Union Jack and the red, white, and blue flag flapping together. The English flag is severe and masculine; the French flag is gay and feminine. They go admirably well together."

"All your compatriots do not look on this union with such favourable eyes. Most of them still mistrust us. You must own that they do."

"I own it. You see the home policy of England is just as loyal and great as her foreign policy is petty, dangerous, and full of snares. In France, it is just the opposite. Our home policy is just as blundering and dishonest as our foreign policy is straightforward, large, and chivalrous. The proof is that no one has ever been able to accuse France of perfidy. 'Perfidious France' is never even said."

"Perfidious Albion," put in Rodney, "is said often enough!"

"It certainly is," I answered, laughing.

"You must admit, though," continued Mr. Lester, "that England, with its enormous population, must think of its interests before anything else."

"Agreed; but I should like England to do so openly. Then, too, it is your press that gives a suspicious look to your policy."

"There, you are right," exclaimed Mrs. Nerwind.

"It is the most powerful press in the world, and it plays unscrupulously with the security of nations and the prosperity of individuals."

"And the Government cannot always put a muzzle on it," answered Mr. Lester.

"It can when it wants to. It did when it was in the interest of the country. At present your press is behaving very well with regard to us. May this last!"

"You spoke just now of the home policy of France. It bewilders me completely. At times, I fancy I have grasped the spirit of it, then something happens, and I am not in it at all. It seems to me that it bears on the question of parties—

and you have such a collection of them—rather than on the questions of vital interest for a nation."

"Ah, you have understood our home policy only too well. It is just that. In England, you follow a flag, the Union Jack. We never follow anything but an oriflamme—the Republic, the Monarchy, the Empire, or Nationalism even. In critical situations your statesmen are no longer Conservatives, Liberals, Tories, or Whigs. They are Englishmen, and above all Britishers. They fling themselves into the breach, ward off blows on the right, on the left, throw powder into the enemy's eyes, endeavour to save the face of things, and, helped by true patriotism, they succeed. During that time, the whole nation behind them, collects itself, repairs its mistakes, fills in the deficits. It was like this that you came out of the Transvaal affair. England knows how to prove its love for England, and France does not know how to prove its love for France."

"What you say is fairly right, but you think too well of our home policy. It is just as fertile in muddles as yours. Just at present, we are having one with our War Office and you with your Navy."

"For the last few years, in France, beside the big knots, there are constantly little ones. We call these 'Affairs' with a capital A. They are the most difficult of any to unravel. And, unfortunately, all these knots, large and small, stop the current of progress. They are so many interrupters."

"Quite true. We look to the Liberal party in our country to undo a few of these knots," said Mr. Lester, with a mischievous look at his aunt.

"And make some fresh ones!" replied Mrs. Nerwind promptly.

We were drinking our tea during this conversation, and we were interrupted by the usual questions: "Weak or strong?" "Do you take sugar and cream?" etc. The doors had been swinging to and fro as the guests of the Honourable Members arrived. The tables had gradually filled with people, and the picture I had come to see had gradually been developing.

In front of the low, wide terrace of the House of Commons, the Thames was flowing along, rough and busy. On the opposite

bank of the river, the lonely-looking buildings of St. Thomas's Hospital stood out in an unpleasant way. The whole length of the balustrade was gay with groups of women in light dresses relieved by somewhat startling colours. Among these groups were a few masculine figures, partially hidden by large hats and enormous boas, the feathers of which were blown about by the wind.

Members of Parliament, either in groups or alone, no more decorative in their coats or jackets than our French Deputies are, were strolling up and down, smoking and arguing, but without any gestures. All this, in the light coming from the east, against a greyish Gothic background, had a hard and extraordinarily cold effect.

I saw Mrs. Nerwind look round attentively, and I noticed that the tip of her nose, satirical person as she is, began to quiver dangerously.

"Your afternoon teas are getting rather *bourgeois*, are they not?" she asked. "They used to be more elegant, I remember. The Liberal party must be gaining ground, that is very evident!"

Mr. Lester smiled good-naturedly.

"That's one for me!" he observed.

Our friend's eyes continued their inspection.

"Why are you all so yellow, George?" she asked.

This unexpected question provoked general laughter.

"Because, my dear aunt, for some weeks we are all deprived of fresh air and of our sports, and spend ten, twelve, or fourteen hours in a badly ventilated hall where we all poison each other."

"Ah, I thought that we had the exclusive speciality of bad ventilation in France!" I exclaimed. "Can you do nothing to remedy it?"

"It is impossible. It appears that Gothic architecture does not lend itself to modern hygiene. We are the victims of art and politics, and then we are blamed for not looking fresh. Rather hard on us!"

Just at this moment I saw a face I knew suddenly appear before me.

"Pierre de Coulevain!"

"Mr. Beaumont!" I exclaimed, agreeably surprised.

"Lester, old fellow! Mrs. Nerwind!" said the new arrival. He then saw Edith and started slightly, his face turning a shade paler.

"Miss Baring," he said, "how do you do?"

My friend, whose face had flushed and then lost its colour, stammered another "How do you do?" They shook hands, and I alone had surprised the wave of emotion that had just passed between them, betraying them so unmistakably.

"How is this?" said Mr. Beaumont to me with an accent of reproach in his voice. "You are here in London and you did not let me know! I had your promise, nevertheless——"

"I thought you were still in America."

"I have been back a fortnight, and have been staying in Devonshire. Where are you?"

"At Claridge's."

"Ah, so much the better. My sister is going there on Saturday."

"Will you have a cup of tea, Beaumont?" asked our host.

"No, thanks; I have an engagement, and, as I was a little early, I just came in for a moment. I was sure I should come across some friends."

"And what about the journey to America?"

"It was very interesting. I must tell you all about it."

In a nervous voice, Mr. Beaumont exchanged a few words with the engaged couple and with Mr. Lester. He did not speak to Edith, and he avoided looking at her. He asked me if he might call the following day, and then took his leave.

Mrs. Nerwind watched him as he went away.

"He is still nice-looking," she said.

"His wife is dead, is she not?" asked Rodney.

"Yes; she did not die soon enough to spare him the scandal of the divorce, unfortunately. It was an abominable affair!"

This was a flash of light to me. I remembered what Edith had said. Was not this the divorced man who had asked her to marry him?

"Last year," said the young man, "he was paying attention to that beautiful American widow, Mrs. Oswald. Everyone thought he had gone to America to marry her."

"I do not see Beaumont marrying a foreigner, or, indeed, anyone else, for that matter," observed Mr. Lester. "After an experience like his——?"

"That experience is a guarantee for him," declared Mrs. Nerwind. "He has paid his tribute to bad luck."

"And what a tribute! By George!" exclaimed Mr. Baring.

"One of our whips," said our host, indicating a Member who had just passed by.

"One of our *fouets!*" I repeated, translating literally.

"We call those men whips, in Parliamentary slang, who, both in the Lords and Commons, are charged with the organisation of their party. Every party, whether Conservative, Liberal, Unionist, or anything else, has its whips. The whip is the intermediary between the chief of the party and his group. His mission is to watch over the group, to stimulate its zeal, increase its influence, and see that the Members are there when there is an important vote on. We give the name of whip to the convocation, even. In short, the whip serves in a way as the shepherd's dog. If his group be ministerial, one applies to him for places and titles."

"Well, that is an institution that we do not possess," I said, greatly amused. "With us the parliamentary shepherd dogs would have difficulty with their flock. Poor things! They would go mad before long."

"It is a pity that your Chamber of Deputies has not a terrace looking on to the Seine," observed Ruby.

"And if it had one, you may be sure that our Deputies would never give any afternoon tea there," I answered. "They would always prefer staying with each other, either quarrelling, gossiping, or smoking in the lobbies."

"Well, a cup of tea, taken in feminine society, rests us," confessed Mr. Lester. "It is a complete diversion, a truce. I was worried, for instance, when I came out, and now I feel that I am set up again for another few hours."

"We can say the same," remarked Mrs. Nerwind, graciously, "for we have done honour to your table."

"That is a great compliment," he replied.

Bells began to ring on all sides, and we rose, accompanied by our host. We passed under arches, through some dark corridors and across courts that reminded one of the Middle Ages. I stood still for a moment and looked round.

"Brr-r," I said. "How icy-cold it all looks!"

"It scarcely seems in accordance with our coats and our modernism."

"No; but it goes admirably with your river, your skies, and even with your soul."

In spite of this harmony, which made me admire the imposing mass of the English Houses of Parliament, I experienced a sensation of relief when I found myself once more in the warm, gay light of the street.

Rodney accompanied Mrs. Nerwind and Ruby home, and, as it was still early, Edith proposed to me that we should go to the Park. On the way there, I talked of our tea-party, of all the things I had noticed, of the false elegance of the dresses, of the adulation which the Members of Parliament received and of their evident delight. I did not say a word about Mr. Beaumont, as I wanted to make Edith question me. She was longing to do so, I was sure, but the shyness and reserve of love probably kept her from speaking. I could see the quivering of her nostrils and of the corner of her lips. From time to time she looked at me, and it seemed to me that there was a mute prayer and eager curiosity in her eyes. All this strengthened my conviction, and I found the psychological study most enjoyable. We were neither of us interested in our forced conversation, so that there was gradually silence between us. On arriving at the Park, our carriage took its turn and entered the Row. It seemed as though the crowd gave Edith courage, for she turned suddenly towards me and asked:

"How long have you known Mr. Beaumont?"

This was my triumph. I was now holding my friend in my hand, like a poor bird, and I could feel her heart beating.

"Oh, not a very long time," I replied; "but circumstances brought us together and made us friends very quickly and very intimately. I made his acquaintance at his wife's death-bed."

"Oh!"

This exclamation was uttered with all the expression that an Englishwoman can put into that word, and that is saying a great deal.

"Poor Lady Rose!" I continued.

"You pity her?"

"Yes, very much indeed. If you knew all, you would pity her, too. Let us go down a more quiet avenue and I will tell you about it. In the midst of this worldly parade, it seems like a profanation to talk of it all."

Edith spoke to the coachman, and he drove in another direction. In about a quarter of an hour we were in a part of the Park that seemed like the heart of the country. We got out of the carriage and took a shady path that looked quite lonely. In the distance we could see the Serpentine sparkling and there were sheep grazing under the shade of the century-old trees.

"It seems as though we are a hundred miles away from London, does it not?" I said.

"Yes, indeed," replied Edith.

I could see that she was anxious to hear my story, and I began it at once.

"About a year and a half ago," I said, "I was still at Vevey, although it was about the middle of November. The weather was so wonderfully good that I felt no temptation to return to Paris. I was staying at the M—— Hotel. One evening, an American woman, who had a suite of rooms on the first floor, gave a large dinner-party. By way of enlivening it, she had a troupe of Italian singers. The room door was open, and their rich, warm voices rang through the house in waves of lively melody.

"The wide landing, on which all these rooms opened, led down to the hall, and a number of persons were listening to the delightful concert. I took a seat near the banister and very

soon an Englishwoman took up her position near me. She had a cigarette between her lips, and she was wearing a well-cut grey costume, a waistcoat, and a white necktie. An Englishwoman dressed in this style at nine o'clock in the evening, and smoking a cigarette, was somewhat suspicious."

"I should think so," assented Edith, her lip arched with a shade of contempt.

"In spite of that, or rather, perhaps, because of that, she aroused my interest. She was about forty years of age, with thick, dark blonde hair, arranged loosely in a knot at the back of her neck. She had large, light blue eyes, her complexion was somewhat raddled, and her features were good, but her face was rather puffed. I noticed that her hand trembled, and I wondered whether she were addicted to morphia or alcohol. The heavy, dull look in her eyes made me think it must be alcohol.

"It was as though a magnetic or psychical current had suddenly been established between us, for, turning round to me, she suddenly said, in a brusque tone: 'That music does one good, does it not?'

"'Yes,' I replied, 'it seems to have the power of chasing away the evil spirits.'

"'Yes; but unfortunately they come back again at a double-quick gallop,' she answered, shutting her gold cigarette box with a sharp click, after taking out another cigarette.

"I fetched her a chair out of my room, which was just near, and she thanked me with the simplicity of a woman accustomed to society. A gay, joyous song could be heard just then, and we were both silent under the spell of its harmony.

"'I suppose it is an American woman who is giving all this,' remarked my unknown woman after the last note.

"'Yes, I happen to know her. It is a Mrs. May, who has bought a villa on Lake Maggiore. She is waiting here until it is ready for her.'

"'Ah, our cousins have a good time in this world. They are the only ones left who do have a good time.'

"'Oh, I do not fancy they are any happier than we are.'

"'Do you believe in justice?' she asked abruptly.

"'Absolutely!'

"'I do not.'

"These words were punctuated by another click of the cigarette box.

"At each interval of the music, we continued our conversation. It became remarkably familiar. I felt that this Englishwoman was experiencing some deep bitterness of soul, and that she had a grievous spite against all people and against life itself. I was sure that I was in the presence of a woman who was by no means ordinary, and who had lost her social position, and my interest increased."

"I fancy," put in Edith, smiling, "that you have a weakness for the black sheep."

"I confess that I have. I have no sympathy with their vices, but with their qualities. Under their black fleeces, I have often found generous hearts and interesting souls. It was like this with Lady Rose. In any case, that evening, when we separated, I held out my hand to her. She hesitated for half a second, and then she took it and grasped it in a very masculine way, looking straight into my eyes as she did so. We separated without telling each other our respective names. For the next two days I looked out for her in the hotel, but did not meet her anywhere. The third day, her maid brought me her card. I read the name of Lady Rose Moster, and then, written very illegibly in pencil, the words: 'I am not well, and should be so pleased if you would come and see me.' I sent her my card, telling her that I should like to call on her and that I would be with her very soon. I finished a letter that I was writing for the post, and then went to her. I passed through her sitting-room, and I never shall forget the heart-rending picture I saw. Her bedroom was very light and gay-looking. The bed was in the middle of the room and, sitting up in bed, with her hands clasped round her knees, was a woman in cream silk pyjamas, smoking a cigarette. On the table to the right was a bottle of brandy, marked Martel, some Vichy water, a large box of cigarettes, and, to the left, a bunch of

white roses mixed with violets. The light came streaming in from the two windows, and I saw a beautiful but puffed face, and dull eyes, the unmistakable blemishes of alcoholism.

"I took a seat in the armchair placed near the bed.

"'I was sure you would come,' she said.

"'Why should I not come?' I replied. 'It was very kind of you to wish to see me. Are you not well?'

"She shrugged her shoulders expressively.

"'You have guessed what is the matter with me, have you not?' she said, and, pointing to the brandy bottle, she continued: 'That's what is the matter with me. I prefer your knowing the truth.'

"'People recover from that disease,' I began.

"'No,' she replied drily, throwing the end of her cigarette in a skilful way straight into the grate, where a wood fire was burning. 'Women, at any rate, do not recover, or, if there should exist a remedy, I have not found it. Do you really believe that alcoholism is a disease?'

"'I really do.'

"'Well, then, we can talk it over.

"'As there is an insect that likes the vine, there may also be a microbe that likes its spirit, alcohol, and that asks for it.'

"This idea amused Lady Rose, and she smiled. Her whole face then lighted up and she explained her situation to me.

"'What you say is quite possible. I will tell you all about it,' she began. 'About ten years ago I began to have a sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach. I cannot describe to you the unbearable suffering of that awful gnawing sensation in the whole system. It is a sort of sinking which only alcohol can stop. I can remember, just as one remembers the first sensations of love, the instantaneous relief which a whiskey and soda gave me. Ah, the microbe was happy, I can tell you, and so was I,' said Lady Rose, humorously. 'In spite of all that, I saw the danger. I sent for my doctor, and I spoke to him of my fear of becoming a victim to alcoholism. I told him that two of my uncles on my father's side and one on my mother's side had been addicted to it. He did not take this seriously,

but merely gave me tonics which had no effect. This same doctor was the first to say to my husband, later on, that it was a pity the law would not allow him to have me shut up. Well, the need of alcohol soon became more frequent and more imperative with me. Not only did I seek relief in it, but complete oblivion, intoxication. Morbid fancies developed, and gradually I got into the worst company. I went down incredibly quickly, and so low that my husband obtained his divorce from me and I left England. My children were told that their mother was dead, and quite right, too,' added Lady Rose, with an accent of savage anger with herself. 'My own family were most cruel. Mr. Beaumont, my husband, behaved as a gentleman. Go and look at his portrait in the next room, and the portrait of my boys, too.'

"I guessed that the poor woman wanted some brandy, and that she was ashamed to drink in my presence. I went into the next room and saw there two red morocco frames on a little desk. In the one was a photograph of three adorable children, and in the other that of a man about thirty-five, with a handsome, aristocratic face. His intellectual-looking forehead had a deep, horizontal wrinkle very strongly marked. His eyes looked hard and sad, but around the nose and under the moustache there was a kind and very youthful smile. I noticed that there were fresh violets around the portraits of the father and children. The keen regret of which these were a proof filled my eyes with tears and my heart with sympathy.

"Poor Lady Rose! When I returned to her, the smell of brandy informed me that I had been right in my supposition.

"'They are very nice, are they not?' she asked.

"'Yes, indeed,' I replied; 'but now, tell me,' I continued, 'have you tried everything in order to cure yourself?'

"'Everything, even to spiritual remedies, suggestion, Christian Science, everything. I even turned Catholic. You see, I have been strangely handicapped. My father was an eccentric man. He gave a very superior education to his two elder daughters and he decided that the two younger ones should only learn reading, writing, and arithmetic. It was an experi-

ment that he wanted to try, and he died before he had seen the result of it. I was one of the two younger ones. My sister died at an early age, fortunately. I tried to cultivate my mind by reading, but the foundation was lacking. I was soon discouraged, and my brain is so empty that I had not the force to fight against things. It does not matter now, as I have reached the last stage of my disease—since it is a disease.'

"'Oh, no,' I protested. 'You are so young.'

"'I am worn out to the very soul,' she said. 'I have the most intolerable pains in my legs. I can feel paralysis approaching. I went out the day before yesterday, probably for the last time. I went to Clarens to conclude the purchase of my grave in the cemetery. That very evening I made your acquaintance. How strange it all is! Do you know that for the last four years I have not talked with a decent woman, and it seemed so good——'

"'Poor Lady Rose!' I said very quietly.

"'Yes, poor Lady Rose, that is the right thing to say about me. A woman who has fallen from her own station in life is, of course, doomed to mix with people of ill-repute. If she has money, such people seize on her, like so many poisonous flies. That is just what has happened to me. My maid is a heartless creature without any sense of morality. I cannot expect anything else. I have had enough of vileness, though; I have been up to my neck in it. Death will be a great deliverance, it will be the great purification——'

"'Yes, I understand you,' I said; 'but you must not hasten it.'

"'No, you see that I mix the poison now with Vichy water. I promised the doctor who was with me in the attack I had on arriving here. He was so kind, and he won my heart by saying: "Poor child" to me. Do you not think I am silly?'

"'No; and I should like you to promise me something now,' I said.

"'What is it?'

"'I want to do you good, to make you more comfortable. Providence has not sent me to cross your path for nothing.'

"'Providence! Do you imagine that Providence troubles about me, or indeed about anyone?'

"'I will prove to you that it does. From what you have just told me, I see that you need a friend.'

"'Oh, God, I should just think I do!'

"'Well, then, let me be a friend to you. Will you?'

"Lady Rose took the cigarette from her mouth and gazed at me a few seconds in silence.

"'I will, indeed,' she said at last, speaking decidedly, almost solemnly.

"'Thank you!' I exclaimed, joyfully. We clasped hands, as though to seal a bargain. I went away a few minutes later, my heart literally torn by all she had told me, but I felt glad to undertake the task which had thus come in my way.

"The next six weeks were keenly interesting to me, and for Lady Rose they were of unexpected sweetness. After two or three days of resistance, she finally gave herself up entirely to my care, and this was a great joy to me.

"In the first place I found an intelligent Swiss maid to put in the place of the woman who was supposed to attend to her, but who left her alone whole afternoons and neglected her abominably. Providence sent me just the assistant I needed in the person of Kate Simpson, an English nurse, whom I had seen at work in the service of an American friend, and admired immensely. She was on friendly terms with the landlady of the hotel, and from time to time stayed with her for a rest. On seeing her appear one day in the garden, I nearly put my arms round her neck. I at once began to tell her of my 'case.' She knew all about Lady Rose Moster, and told me that she was the daughter of the Duke of W——. I asked her if she would undertake the case, but she did not care to, as she was resting. I appealed to her patriotism, and finally she consented. As I knew my patient had a horror of nurses, I introduced Kate for her skill in massage. She was engaged by Lady Rose, who soon felt the benefit of the treatment. The two rooms next Lady Rose's happened to be empty. I engaged one for a dressing-room, and the other for the nurse. In this way the

invalid was watched over. Everything was put in order, glasses and plates were not left lying about on the table, and the furniture was no longer thick with dust. There were flowers everywhere, and the bed was prettily arranged. It was a delight to me to see her in pleasant, although not luxurious surroundings. I told her to send for me every day when she was ready to receive me, as I did not want to risk humiliating her by appearing when she was at her worst. She generally sent her maid for me about three o'clock, and I stayed with her for the rest of the afternoon. Kate went out then for her daily walk. The invalid and I talked or played cards or dominoes. We used to admire the sunsets which are the glory of Vevey. The first few days she invented all kinds of excuses for getting rid of me when she wanted to 'calm her microbe,' as she expressed it. Later on, she would simply tell me not to look, and I would walk away to the window while she poured the poison into a glass with her beautiful, shaking hand.

"In our conversations, her ignorance, of which she had explained the cause, was very evident. She was very intelligent, though, and had a great deal of intuition. Her mind was somewhat confused, but her flashes of wit and her droll expressions were very amusing. She spoke French easily, with a pretty accent, but she neither knew nor troubled much about the grammar. I never saw human duality so distinctly as in her. When talking with her, at times, she gave me the impression of a very superior and refined woman. Quite suddenly, without any rhyme or reason, as though moved by an irresistible impulse, she would utter some cynical remark or some vulgar word, which betrayed a coarse mentality. Just in the same way, she had two smiles: the one beautiful and the other very hideous, a vicious grimace. She had all the frankness and boldness of the sportswoman, the wicked charm of the androgyne, and the innate nobility of the *grande dame*, a nobility that her degrading malady had not succeeded in destroying. She noticed everything I did for her, and gleams of pleasure and of gratitude lit up her heavy expression. She said charming things at times. One day, when she was

pouring Vichy water into her brandy, she said to me with her pretty smile:

"'You see, I am making it weaker and weaker. I am so happy now. It will never do, though, to make myself regret things too much.'

"Kate believed that Lady Rose's end was very near. She was always more or less under the influence of alcohol, and so took very little food. She smoked all the time, and delighted in her skill in throwing her cigarette ends from her bed into the fire-grate. In spite of her shaking hands she managed this very cleverly. She would frequently gaze out at some particular spot of the picturesque landscape, seen from her window, and she was then hypnotised, as it were, by this, and did not feel the pain that was torturing her legs.

"We persuaded her to leave her bed and to spend her afternoons on a sofa in her sitting-room. She used to wear just a kimono over her pyjamas, but I induced her to have a tea-gown made. She gave me some cream Liberty satin for this purpose and some wonderful Venetian lace, that were lying stowed away in her trunks. A Parisian dressmaker at Montreux made her a most elegant gown with this. When she put it on for the first time, she looked at herself for a long time in the glass.

"'Yes,' she said, with a pathetic smile, 'it is I myself. I recognise myself again.'

"In honour of the new dress, I had invited the English Catholic priest and the doctor to tea. I had also told Mrs. May to send in her card towards half-past four, and ask whether Lady Rose could see her. When the patient received the message, she coloured, hesitated, and looked at me in a distressed way.

"'Oh, yes,' I said, 'you must let her come in. She has asked after you so often.'

"Thereupon the American woman arrived, with a beautiful bunch of chrysanthemums. A few pleasant remarks were interchanged. The conversation became lively and interesting, and Lady Rose acted her part as hostess as well as she

could. When once our guests had left, she laughed in a dry, mocking way.

"'To think that those good people have been taking tea with Lady Rose!' she said. 'Does not that seem droll to you,' she continued, 'as you have a sense of humour?'

"'Not at all,' I answered. 'I do not see——'

"'It is a good thing that you did not see,' she interrupted brusquely.

"Unfortunately, that was the last little dissipation for her. For the next week her state of health did not vary much and then, all at once, she became worse. Kate's clever massage had, no doubt, kept the paralysis in check, but it finally attacked her left leg and twisted her foot. She would not let us see her grief, but we noticed that she had recourse to the accursed drink more frequently, and that she took it stronger and stronger.

"Christmas came, and we decorated her rooms with holly and mistletoe. I went to see her early in the day. It would have been a mockery to wish her a Merry Christmas, so that I only kissed her affectionately. We had arranged that Kate, she, and I should all dine together. My afternoon was taken up with visitors and at six o'clock the nurse came to me, looking very much distressed, to tell me that I should find our patient in a pitiable condition. She had insisted on drinking all day long, and it had been impossible to prevent her.

"I went to her with a pang at my heart, and found her in a state beyond all words. She was wrapped in a kimono with her thick plait hanging down her back, and was lying on her sofa. On a low table near were the portraits of her husband and children, all decorated with flowers. She was completely intoxicated and, with her swollen face and her drunken tone of voice, there was no trace of distinction about her. It was drunkenness in all its abjection, English drunkenness. She looked at me with her dull eyes and said in a thick voice:

"'We will have high times together—high times.'

"Her heavy eyelids dropped, and she fell asleep again and forgot. She forgot the gay Christmases of Old England, with its homes all decorated with holly and mistletoe. She forgot

the family from which she had been banished, and forgot that she was dead to her own children.

"The next morning she came out of her torpor refreshed, extraordinarily lucid, but very weak. When she saw me again, a painful blush came to her face.

"'I was very bad yesterday,' she said. 'I am so sorry.'

"'It was a relapse,' I said, as gently as I could speak.

"'The last one, I hope,' she replied. She looked at me timidly, and then, after some hesitation, she continued:

"'I should like to see Mr. Beaumont.'

"'A good idea!' I exclaimed. 'Send him a wire.'

"'I do not know whether I dare.'

"'It seems to me that it is almost your duty.'

"'My duty?'

"'Yes; your duty to yourself.'

"'If he comes, will you speak to him? Will you tell him what you think of my state?'

"'I certainly will.'

"An expression of joy came into her face.

"'Well, then, let us telegraph,' she said.

"I took up a pen and wrote the words she dictated:

"'Am dying. Want to say good-bye.
'ROSE.'

"I sent one telegram to the Wellington Club, London, and another to Beaumont Castle, Devonshire. They had scarcely been sent an hour when our patient began to get feverishly excited. She kept looking eagerly at the clock, and she threw one cigarette after another into the fireplace. I endeavoured to divert her thoughts with cards, and I cheated unscrupulously, in order to force the hand of fate. As a matter of fact, I was just as anxious and excited as she was. I was so afraid that the poor dying woman might be humiliated and disappointed. Towards six o'clock, a telegram arrived. Her nervous fingers tore it in opening it. The sudden lighting up of her face comforted me. She held the paper out to me, and I read the words:

"'Will take the first train and be at Vevey to-morrow evening.
'PHILIP.'

"'Dear boy!' she exclaimed.

"The words came to her lips quite naturally, as if the spring of pure love had once more opened up within her. With a happy smile she put the telegram under her pillow. I stayed late with her that night, and I remember distinctly how hard I found it to leave her. In the night I heard cries in her room and, putting on my dressing-gown, I rushed there. Kate came forward to meet me, told me that she had had another attack, that the doctor was there, and that I could do nothing. She insisted on my going back to bed. The cries began again. I had never known a case where Death made a human being cry out like this. It seemed to me as though they were killing her. I stopped my ears and put my head under the clothes. It was horrible. She was probably not conscious herself. Soon there was silence again. As soon as day began to break, I went once more to her room. The doctor was just coming out and his kind face looked distressed.

"'It is all over,' he said. 'She has finished suffering, thank God.'

Kate would not allow me to go in until everything had been done for the poor dead woman, and until the supreme beauty had come to her. When I entered her bedroom in the afternoon, I stopped on the threshold in my amazement. She was wearing her beautiful Liberty satin gown trimmed with Venetian point. Her smooth hair was twisted in a knot at the back of her head in English fashion. She looked as though she were at rest, really at rest at last. All trace of alcoholism had disappeared, and her features had got back their old purity. There was a delicate, mysterious smile on her face, a smile with a touch of irony in it. The nobility of her race came out now, and she looked like a real *grande dame*. In just a few hours, Death had transformed the degraded woman. 'We ought to love Death,' I said to myself; 'it cannot be what we think it is, I am sure.' The phenomenon of irradiation, which I had noticed several times before, had never struck me as forcibly as now. I wondered whether it could be produced by the liberated soul. Is it its farewell to the body which has been the instrument

of its work here below? Alas, we know nothing yet about the radiology of the world beyond the grave.

"Kate had put large green plants about the room, and had arranged Mrs. May's flowers and mine very tastefully.

"The English priest came to bless the dead. He did this with religious fervour and unction.

"I waited for Mr. Beaumont in great trepidation. I had asked the doctor to meet him at the station and break the news. When he entered the sitting-room, I went forward to meet him.

"'I was Lady Rose's friend,' I said, by way of introduction. He moved back instinctively, and his face flushed. I saw the mistake I had made, and added:

"'The last few days of her life.'

"He held out his hand to me at once. 'I am too late,' he said in a broken voice.

"'Yes, she passed away this morning; but your telegram gave her great joy.' We sat down and I told him about the last six weeks. With all the strength of my own conviction, I insisted upon my idea that Lady Rose had been the victim of a malady and not of a vice. I had the sensation all the time that she heard me pleading her cause and that she was glad.

"Mr. Beaumont listened in silence, his elbow on his knee and his hand hiding his face, so that I should not see his emotion. I then took him to his own portrait and to that of his children. I showed him the violets with which the dead woman had adorned them and I then opened the door of the room, where she was awaiting him. He went in alone and I closed the door gently.

"When I saw him again, he clasped my hand in such a grip that I made a grimace, for it positively hurt me. We made the arrangements for the funeral together. The service took place at the Vevey Catholic Church. Mrs. May and several people living at the hotel went to it. The body was then taken to Clarens, and we went there, too.

"Mr. Beaumont behaved like a true gentleman. He was most generous in paying for all services that had been rendered to the woman who had borne his name. Lady Rose had

left two hundred pounds in her will to those who had been with her at the last. I was delighted at this for the sake of Kate and the Swiss maid.

"Mr. Beaumont and I left Vevey together. He stayed a few days at my hotel in Paris. He has been to see me there several times since. The last time was just before he started for America. By common consent, we have never spoken again of the dead woman. The subject will always be painful to him, and I can quite understand that."

"Poor Lady Rose!" said Edith, very quietly, her eyes shining with tears.

"That's right!" I said, putting my arm through hers. "I am glad you have said that."

We returned to the hotel without speaking another word, but I was sure about the state of my companion's feelings. Her face had betrayed her several times during my story. At the words "dear boy" uttered by another woman, in reference to Philip Beaumont, she had had that shrinking movement which is caused by contact with something that gives pain. That alone would have convinced me.

I had set out from the hotel to take tea at the House of Commons, and I had been drawn into a romance, and then taken to a solitary spot in Hyde Park to tell Edith Baring about Lady Rose's dramatic end. What is all this for? . . .

London.

Mr. Beaumont has confided in me, and I know Edith's secret. They care for each other undoubtedly. They will never be happy apart, that is still more certain; but pride has stepped in between them, and pride is a force capable of fighting with love and capable of crushing it. This must not happen.

Edith was in my room with me when Mr. Beaumont's card was brought in. She did not make any remark, but the reflection of her emotion could be seen on her face.

I took my visitor into the large drawing-room, which happened, fortunately, to be empty. He expressed his pleasure at meeting me again, and asked about my doings and plans

with real interest. Whilst answering him, I examined him with great curiosity. Yes, his face with its clear-cut features and energetic expression, his well-built, sportsmanlike figure were just what Edith would approve. I noticed that he was in a nervous state of mind. He went round about the subject he was longing to start on, and then he said suddenly:

"You know Miss Baring, then? You never spoke of her to me."

"She is a new friend," I answered. "We met this winter at Monte Carlo, and she invited me to England. I have just spent a month at St. Olaf."

My visitor rose from his chair, walked about for a minute or two, and then sat down again.

"Did she tell you anything, after our meeting yesterday?" he asked.

"No."

"Well, then, I will tell you. It is not a long story. Four years ago, I was at the Hotel Beau-Site, Cannes, at the same time as Miss Baring and her cousin. We were attracted to each other, probably because we were of the same nationality and education, and we became good friends. We went for long walks and excursions, we played tennis together, talked and argued. After all the horrors I had gone through, you can imagine what it meant to me to come into contact with a wholesome mind and a straightforward nature like hers. I was like a traveller who, after being doomed to muddy water, suddenly comes across a spring of pure, fresh water. To sum up briefly, I was in love with her, but in love as I had never thought it possible to be. I had imagined that Miss Baring cared for me and that she would accept me, but I was a divorced man, and consequently she refused me. Even after knowing the reason of my divorce, she was not tempted to make me forget my wretched past. She could have done this, and she knew that she could."

"How do you know that she was not tempted to do this?" I asked.

"Well, at any rate, the temptation was not strong enough to make her yield to it. Consequently it does not count."

"Ah, that is just like a man," I said. "When a woman struggles and suffers for the sake of a principle that is against him, it does not count. Then, too, for the last year and a half, you have been free. You might have tried again."

"But she is a Catholic now. Her religion would probably not allow her to marry a Protestant. Would you have me risk a second refusal? I can still hear her very categorical 'no' ringing in my ears. I do not imagine that any man ever heard such an energetic refusal. You have no idea of the effect of that kind of affront. It hurts a man more deeply than you can possibly imagine. It gives one the sensation of a burn, and I do not care to try it again."

"Is it not rather that you have been fascinated by a certain American widow?" I asked.

Philip Beaumont blushed violently.

"By Mrs. Oswald?" he said, with a nervous laugh. "Ah, I see you are well posted. Well, I will not deny that she fascinated me. She is very pretty, very brilliant, and very sweet. Our flirtation was so serious, that it would probably have finished by taking us very shortly to some good clergyman of the Church of England. Fortunately, we both discovered in time the great distance that an infinite number of things put between us. We did not dare take the leap. We had the courage to step back, for there is courage required sometimes for that step. We spent a few days in the house of mutual friends in Warwickshire, in surroundings that were absolutely English. She seemed to me out of place there, she was like a wrong note. I remember seeing her gathering flowers, one morning, with long suede gloves on. She was wearing a fragile white dress, a hat caught up at the side with a single peony. She looked Parisian and supremely elegant. Dressed like that, in the old English garden, she seemed to me adorable and ridiculous. She looked like a figure for a French garden, or for some Trianon. She, on her side, soon realised that our simple, rough country life, the very soul of which is outdoor sport, would not suit her at all. She kept saying: 'Oh, it is frightful!' in the drollest way. We told each other our im-

pressions very loyally, and the whole thing came to an end in a declaration of sincere friendship. By way of keeping my promise to her, I went to America and spent six months there. The time was not lost, I can assure you. I saw Mrs. Oswald at Palm Beach, Newport, where she has a splendid house. The setting there suits her admirably, and I had no wish to take her away from it. Now, my dear Pierre de Coulevain, that is the long and short of the episode that has caused so much talk. One of these days I shall go in for politics and I hope I shall have some satisfaction with my boys. I expect them to make up to me for other things. As to Miss Baring, she will no doubt marry a good Roman Catholic. She is quite an acquisition to the Roman Catholics already."

"Should you like me to tell you just what I think?" I said. "Well, then, I think she is very much attached to her new religion. She has found in it the moral support that she needed. All is clear to me now. She has a Catholic mentality, but in a man she would probably prefer the Protestant mentality, as it is stronger and more manly. She is above and beyond everything else very Anglo-Saxon."

"She would be furious if she heard you say that," remarked Mr. Beaumont, with a little laugh, in which there was unconscious joy.

"That may be, but the fact remains or, at any rate, it is my impression. Take it for what it is worth, and make what use you like of it."

"Thank you, but it is of no use to me."

These words were uttered in a dry tone that did not disconcert me in the least.

"Do you know that Miss Baring is with me at the hotel?" I asked.

"Really? I thought she was staying with Mrs. Nerwind. Well, I am glad you know all this——"

"Yes, it will save me from blunders," I interrupted.

"Oh, the situation is very clear, so far as we are concerned. Sooner or later we were bound to meet again. We are in the same set and live in the next county to each other. Let us

talk of something else now. Let the dead past bury its dead, as we say."

I at once turned the conversation on to other subjects. Later on, just as Mr. Beaumont was leaving, he told me that his sister was coming, and asked my permission to introduce her to me.

"It is very strange," he said, looking at me curiously, "that you should come into my life a second time like this."

"I was necessary to you, and I am probably necessary again. Providence has evidently enlisted me in your service."

"Many thanks to Providence and to you," he remarked.

We separated with these words, and the emotion that I heard in Mr. Beaumont's voice explained a great deal to me. When I went back to Edith, I was well posted. I found her seated at the open window of her sitting-room with the *Morning Post* on her lap. Needless to say, she had not read a line.

She was waiting for me with throbbing veins and a pang at her heart. Her eyes questioned me eagerly, but timidly. I went straight to her and laid my hand on her shoulder.

"The divorced man was Philip Beaumont," I said, triumphantly.

"He has told you——" she began.

"Everything," I answered.

"He was quite at liberty to tell you," she said. "I do not approve of a woman talking of having refused this or that man. It always seems to me horribly vulgar and indelicate."

"You are perfectly right," I answered.

"That is the only reason why I did not tell you, although I very much wanted to take you into my confidence."

"That does not matter now in the least," I answered. "The gods have a weakness for novelists, and so they found a way to let me know. And so it was at Cannes that you made each other's acquaintance?"

"Yes, my Australian cousin, Georgie, had asked me to spend the winter with her in the South of France. You can imagine how delighted I was. I little thought what was going to happen."

"No," I said, smiling. "And you do not even yet realise what such things mean."

"Oh, yes, I do now. Since you have taught me how to look at life, I can understand something about the action of the unknown forces of which you speak. The first time Mr. Beaumont came into the hotel restaurant, I felt his presence. I looked straight at him, and it was as though he had some magnetic attraction which only acted on me. I am sure that no one else there noticed his distinguished appearance as I did, and the contrast of his light eyes and dark face. I met him frequently the next few days, either in the hall or at tennis. My cousin and I admired his well-built figure, and we said to each other that he was evidently an Englishman of good family. He seemed to us the only human being who was interesting among all the creatures we met at the Beau-Site. We were not long in discovering that he was the Honourable Mr. Beaumont, the eldest son of Viscount Beaumont. I knew that there was an old Devonshire family of that name, but that was all I knew. One morning we met him when we were out riding. Georgie rides very well——"

"And you, too, I fancy," I interrupted.

"Yes, I ride fairly well, too. At any rate, there was a compliment in Mr. Beaumont's eyes as he looked at us, and I was ridiculously pleased. It is very curious that in a great sentiment like love there should be so many silly little things."

"Infinitely great things are made up of the infinitely small things."

"That is certainly true."

"And that glance of Mr. Beaumont's was followed up by many more such glances, I suppose?"

"No. The next day I was returning from tennis, my racket and my hands behind my back, looking on the ground as I walked along. I suddenly saw something shining among the long grass. Now if I had not been looking down I should not have seen it," broke off Edith in a jesting tone. "You see, I know now how to apply the theories of a certain Pierre de Coulevain. I stooped down and picked up the little shining object. It was a little trinket, such as a man wears on his watch chain, an unpolished stone, of irregular shape, veined with

red and set in gold. I turned it over and over. I then pressed a little spring and found that it was a locket, but an empty locket. I cannot describe the effect produced on me by this empty place in the locket. I gazed at it as though hypnotised by the bright metal. Suddenly a man wearing white flannels was at my side. It was Mr. Beaumont.

"'I think that is my property,' he said, smiling as he raised his hat.

"'I beg your pardon,' I said, greatly confused. 'I was very inquisitive,' I added, handing him the locket; 'but fortunately, it was empty.'

"His face turned suddenly pale, and I blushed crimson at the effect of my words.

"'Yes, it is empty,' he said, 'and lighter to carry,' he added, shutting the locket abruptly. 'I value it, as it is made of a very rare stone, as old as the world. It was given me by an old bonze who was dying. I had made his acquaintance on my first visit to India. According to him, it is to bring me happiness, so that you can imagine how precious it is to me,' he added, in a sarcastic tone. 'I felt sure I had dropped it on my way back from tennis this morning. I have been looking for it for two hours, and I should probably never have found it, if it had not been for you.' After thanking me, the owner of the locket introduced himself. I did the same, and we returned to the hotel together, by the longest way, I fancy. For the next month, I lived in a fool's paradise. I liked Mr. Beaumont, simply because he was himself and I was myself. I see no other reason. Does that agree with your theories?"

"Yes, absolutely."

"An invisible hand seemed to be at work to draw us together, and then, all at once, it separated us. The proceeding was cruel, and I have noticed that such proceedings often take place. When we went for our last walk together, the evening before Mr. Beaumont was going away with a friend on a yachting cruise, he asked me to accept him for my life's companion. You can imagine my reply. He then put his hand through my arm and said in a voice broken by emotion: 'When I met you,

my life was as empty as the famous locket you found, for, as you know, I expect, I am divorced.'

"How can a simple word, an invisible thing, give such a blow as I received! That I can never understand. All I know is that I moved away from him and stood rooted, as it were, to the spot.

"'Divorced!' I exclaimed. 'You divorced!'

"'I thought you knew,' he replied. 'I thought everyone knew,' he added, bitterly.

"'No, I did not know. My cousin, who lives in Australia, did not know, either.'

"Mr. Beaumont took my arm again, more authoritatively this time, and he then told me of the disaster which had befallen him. I listened to him as though I were in a nightmare. When he had told me all, I gazed at him in despair.

"'But you are still married!' were the only words I found to say.

"He protested vehemently, declaring that by all the laws, human and divine, he was free. I tried to believe him. Under his magnetic influence I had not the courage to withdraw my promise and we separated engaged. It was all in vain, though. My scruples returned in full force. The happiness of which I had dreamed and a position which satisfied my ambition were within reach. It would have been so easy to allow myself to drift. I could not, though. There was an obstacle, and that obstacle was a principle within me which obliged me, willingly or unwillingly, to obey it. I must own that I obeyed unwillingly. I was furious with my conscience and with my education. I could not get rid of the idea that Mr. Beaumont was married, and that if I married him he would have two wives. Not only did this seem immoral to me, but ridiculous. I wrote to him explaining the impossibility of a marriage under these conditions. I added that my mother would never consent. When he returned to England, he besought me to let him come and ride with me on the Common. I was weak enough to allow this, but that was the only thing I did that was wrong, and I cannot say that I am virtuous enough to regret it," added

Edith, clenching her fingers nervously. "Those silent gallops, in the same wind and with the same rhythm, are my idea of the joys of Paradise."

"Of a Scandinavian paradise, of Odin's paradise. You are a Northern pagan," I said, smiling.

"What efforts poor Dick made," she went on. "And so willingly, like a gentleman. He kept pace always with the younger horse that my companion was riding. There, now, you have the secret of my love for Dick. You are delighted to know it, are you not?"

"Delighted," I replied.

"All that could not continue, as you can imagine. One day, in a lonely part of the Common, Mr. Beaumont stopped his horse short and, very pale and in a hard voice, he said to me:

"'For the last time, is it to be yes or no?'

"Something very extraordinary then took place. I wanted to answer yes, but under the influence of a strong impulse, which seemed to come to me from outside, I answered brutally:

"'No.'

"Mr. Beaumont rode away in the direction of London and I returned to Wimbledon. All the way back I heard that terrible 'No.' As soon as I had once uttered it, my strength gave way and I felt as weak as though I had just been copiously bled. On arriving at the stables, the grooms were all away at dinner. I took Dick to his box myself, as I frequently did. I threw my arm around his neck, put my face against his head, and said to him in the most foolish way:

"'Oh, Dick, I am in such trouble.'

"He turned his lip back as though to kiss me, and neighed gently several times. I assure you that, for a minute, it seemed as though he were in communion with me. Why should he not have been? Dear old Dick! He is the only creature I confided in." She was silent for a moment, and then she added:

"I am not posing as an inconsolable woman. Only sick people and romantic people are inconsolable. Every day has taken away with it some of my trouble. I have even experi-

enced a sort of pleasure in the struggle I have been waging. I did not go on vegetating, and I even felt myself living. I turned Catholic, not only because I felt the need of a warmer religion, but also because Catholicism does not recognise divorce. In this way, my force of resistance has been increased, and Heaven knows it has been weak enough at times! Yesterday, when you told me about Lady Rose, I was glad that I had not added to her misfortunes. I knew then that I had acted in the right way, and, at times, I have had my doubts about this. I was rewarded by what you told me. I do not regret anything now. I have had an opportunity of discovering the worth of the love that Mr. Beaumont professed for me. When he was free, he did not come to me."

"But knowing that you are now a Catholic, he might have thought that you would never marry a Protestant."

Edith seemed to be struck by this idea. She then gave a short laugh.

"Oh, no," she said; "he fell in love with an American. You heard that. I wonder why he does not marry her?"

"I will tell you," I said, glad to be able to explain things. Whilst I was telling her what I had learnt, she maintained a somewhat haughty mien. Several times a sarcastic or disdainful expression came to her lips, but, in spite of that, I guessed that my words carried and I am sure that they created waves of joy and hope within her.

"There, now, you have the whole truth," I said, in conclusion.

"The truth does not change the facts," she replied drily.

She then got up and patted my shoulder affectionately. "Poor Pierre de Coulevain," she said. "What with Mr. Beaumont and me we have given you such a thick slice of life to digest that you must feel the need of a little fresh air. Let us go out to Roehampton for a change, and," she added gravely, "we will never talk about all this again. We will let the dead past bury its dead."

I could not help smiling on hearing her repeat the same words

as Mr. Beaumont. Both of them will try so hard to forget that I hope they will both be sure to remember.

London.

Another interesting day. All my days in England have been interesting and so curiously different from each other. Yesterday, love, to-day churches, a workhouse, spirituality, human misery, great misery.

Edith had been reserving the pleasure of taking me to the Westminster Catholic Cathedral. We went there together this morning. It would have been impossible to equal the Gothic beauty of Westminster Abbey, its sister church, so that the Byzantine style has been adopted for the Westminster Cathedral. In my opinion, next to the Gothic, the Byzantine style harmonises best with the Anglo-Saxon character. The building was not finished, but, with its bare, grey walls, the altar that had been improvised and its huge figure of Christ, the effect was very striking. I noticed that it seemed to make a great impression on the visitors, who were chiefly Protestants. There was an expression of gravity and of reverence to be seen on their faces, and they unconsciously spoke in a subdued voice and walked as silently as possible. Just near to me was a man with a little boy of some four or five years of age. The child's blue eyes seemed to be fascinated by the crucified figure and I heard him say in his baby English: "Father, me never seen a cross with a man on it." Many of the English sects, by way of obeying the Bible precept which forbids "carven images," never have a crucifix in their places of worship. Hence the child's surprise. The father had some difficulty in turning his attention from the cross, and, even after they had moved on, I saw the little boy turn round again several times. I feel sure that the impression received would never be effaced, and I wonder what that impression may produce?

I then noticed a group of workmen silently engaged in finishing one of the holy-water vessels. It takes years and years and thousands of brains, arms, and hands to produce a beautiful whole such as this Cathedral is destined to be. I won-

dered that in our times, Nature should have commanded its creatures to undertake a work of this kind. I pictured to myself the church when finished, the walls with costly enamels, the columns all in their places, the sanctuary glittering with gold, lighted with wax tapers, the priest officiating, the incense giving a bluish tone to the atmosphere, the chanting of the liturgy coming in beautiful waves of sound to a crowd of faithful worshippers. The poor and the humble will come and share this pomp, and there will be a renewal of spirituality and of sacred poetry.

Centuries will pass by, the ebb of all this life will begin, and there will gradually be silence once more, but something very great will, perhaps, have had its day. When this basilica is finished it will be richer and more magnificent, but it will never be more impressive.

We went from the Cathedral to Westminster Abbey, as I wanted to see this now by way of contrast. On the way I noticed a small church with a pretty rectory or vicarage with flowers in its window boxes. As the door was open, I went in, in spite of the entreaties of my companion. I passed through the vestibule and entered the church itself. I had very quickly seen all there was to see and there was certainly no need of a Baedeker. There were bare walls, rows of pews, admirably polished, a low pulpit and right at the end, in the sanctuary—a table. That was all.

"Does it not give you the horrors?" asked Edith.

"Yes, it does," I replied; "but there are certain mentalities which could not do with anything else. It is all glacial," I added, as we were going out again. "There is not a single symbol."

Edith stopped short and with a mocking expression pointed to a perambulator in the vestibule.

"There is one," she said.

"Yes, indeed, and one that cannot be mistaken," I replied; "for it is very English."

Westminster Abbey! I had just seen the growing branch of a parable, and now here gradually dying away was the branch

of another parable. When a Catholic Cathedral is in the hands of Protestants, it dies. It is a kind of death that is as good as any other, and Nature must vary the end of things as well as of creatures. To vary things seems to be the eternal care of Nature.

Westminster Abbey is not only dying, but its beauty is changing. That is what I so much regret. It was built for the worship of God and the worship of man is now added. There is not room for both of these worships, and the consequence is that they are both cramped within its walls. It ought to be either a temple or a Pantheon, in which the nation could crown its kings. The arrangements which this double form of worship necessitates seem to diminish the size of the structure. The singing at the services disturbs the communion with the dead, and the communion with the dead disturbs the prayers. This morning I had that impression very distinctly. From the distance, the pilgrims visiting the tombs seemed to me like one of those processions of ants to be seen sometimes on tombstones. One or another of them would stop for a moment in front of a tombstone, as though to come into contact with the man lying there and would then move on again. It was very curious. I felt distinctly that current of thoughts and sentiments which the heroes, learned men, poets, and philosophers now gathered there together, had created.

There was nothing astonishing about this. A great man is condensed life. He must necessarily live longer than an ordinary mortal. At Westminster, it is not the church that one feels, but the Pantheon. I gazed at the wings of the building. Just where the smaller arches join the main building, there is a concentration of light and shade which produces something warm and deep. It seems as though the prayers and incense of former days might still be floating in the air there. As far as I am concerned those are the only two points where there is life in all the dead mass of this building.

"Well?" asked Edith, when we were out in the street again.

"It seems to me," I replied, "that there is already a soul in

Westminster Cathedral, and that there is no longer one in the Abbey."

Edith, Ruby, and Rodney spent the afternoon at St. Olaf. I did not want to see it again, without all that had made me like it. I went to have tea with Mrs. Nerwind. She was waiting for me with her hat on.

"I have kept the carriage," she said, "as I want you to see the workhouse of this district. You probably have nothing of this kind in France."

"I am told that these places are the terror of the poor," I said. "Is that true?"

"Yes, they never go there except when they are in the last extremity. Many of them prefer dying of hunger in their wretched homes. And yet they are free to go there or to come out again at their own will and pleasure, and, in return for some sort of light work, they have their food and lodging. The one you will see now is a regular palace. It costs an enormous sum to keep up and it increases our poor-rate considerably."

The workhouse of the West End is, in truth, a palace. The lofty rooms, with vaulted roofs like a cathedral, are well ventilated, lighted by long windows, and remarkably clean. The matron showed me all the rooms. She is a woman with keen eyes and somewhat harsh movements, who seemed to me the very incarnation of an inflexible will. I admired everything, certainly; but there was a pang at my heart, which increased more and more, as I realised the force brought to bear on all these human beings, reducing them to the condition of a mere herd. The supper bell rang and I saw all the women file by on their way to the refectory. I was struck by their clean look. They all wore a grey dress, a little red and yellow checked shawl, and a pretty-shaped white cap. There were women of all ages, with faces in which there seemed to be no more life. The expression on these faces was either one of timidity, shame, or confusion, and their hands were nervous. I did not succeed in meeting the eyes of one of them. A comparatively young woman was clasping an old book and some magazines in her arm. A few minutes later, we saw her in the empty dormitory.

"Are you not having any supper?" I asked.

A disdainful little smile came to her lips.

"I have my own tea in the afternoon and I do not want anything else," she answered.

There was a whole world of meaning conveyed in the words "my own tea."

"Many of them make tea for themselves at three o'clock," explained the matron. "We supply boiling water. They think it is much better than the tea we give," she added in a jesting tone.

"Of course they do. I can quite understand that," I said.

This poor creature had aroused my interest and, looking at the magazines she had put down on the bed, I asked her whether she liked reading.

"Oh, yes," she replied, blushing. "Have you read *Jane Eyre?*" she asked me in a low, timid voice. I nodded.

"It is fine, isn't it?" she said.

"Yes, very fine," I replied.

Her blue, Irish-looking eyes shone for a moment and then almost immediately the light died out of them and the vague, far-away look came back.

"Drink," whispered the matron to me, as we moved away towards the door.

I turned round before leaving the immense dormitory with its bare walls and rows of low beds, and I saw this poor woman all alone, standing up, motionless, with her face turned towards the window which was lighted up by the setting sun. It was horrible, and a shudder ran through me, chilling my very heart. We then went through a wide corridor, painted with enamel, to the refectory, passing on the way through kitchens that were dazzlingly white and clean. All the inmates of the workhouse were there together for this meal, but they could only see each other's backs as in a church. Each one had a large cup of tea and some bread and butter. These human beings, penned up together in this spacious room, the silent meal, the rows of cups all alike, and the heads of all these men, either bald or with white or grey hair, all seemed so sad and pitiful that I regretted

being there. It appeared to me that my presence as an onlooker was an added insult to the misery of these poor vanquished sufferers. My heart was more than full of fraternal affection and pity when I saw the room where the children are born. It is a small room and it contains the things necessary for the sacred operation of childbirth and also the scales for weighing the new-born child. As a matter of fact, those scales weigh the new forces of society. In the adjoining room I saw four silent women with pale faces drawn with suffering. Each of these women had just given to Life another pair of arms and a brain, and surely that is something. They were not married, certainly. Ah, God! no, but they were mothers, and (there is nothing to rank above that.)

In another part of the building I saw some married couples together. Fortunately, they had not been separated, these poor old people. Some of them were in a courtyard which looks on to an old cemetery. They were enjoying the fresh air and some of the husbands were reading the paper to their wives. There were little flames of conjugal love there, no doubt, and these warmed the atmosphere. On leaving this privileged spot we visited another large courtyard where the inmates were in the habit of congregating after their supper. Mrs. Nerwind, who goes a great deal to the workhouse, took her seat on one of the benches, and was soon surrounded by her favourites.

"This is a lady from Paris," she said, by way of introducing me.

The word Paris seemed to act like magic on one of the unfortunate creatures. Her face lighted up and she drew herself up, crossing her little shawl as she spoke.

"Oh, I know Paris well," she said. "I spent three months there when I was a lady's maid."

"Is that long ago?" asked Mrs. Nerwind, glancing at me.

"Long ago?—Yes, I think so—I do not know."

"Drink!" whispered the matron again to me.

Drink, vice, misfortune, forces of which we neither know the origin, the reason, nor the object, had brought all these poor

unfortunates there. On looking at them in that workhouse-yard, it makes one wonder of what use they are and of what use they have been? Each one of them, nevertheless, is one of the necessary threads of Life here. Each one of them has set in movement certain will powers and certain sentiments, has transmitted the orders of the Invisible, just as you and I have done. Each one of these individuals has pronounced words, the effect of which will last a long time, each one has given a push to the "Wheel of Things." Providence will not desert those wearers of white caps and check shawls, but will find a way of making them better, of preparing them for higher work.

When we were driving away, Mrs. Nerwind asked me what I thought of their palace.

"Your palace!" I repeated. "Why, I think it is both superb and cruel. You have built it for yourselves and not for those it is intended to shelter. Those poor people are ill at ease in those great, lofty rooms. The brilliant light is trying for them in their poverty. The strict discipline is killing them. They do not realise all this, certainly; but it causes them suffering nevertheless, and I quite understand that they prefer hunger and cold to the workhouse."

"And yet discipline is necessary, more so there, perhaps, than anywhere."

"Agreed, but it should be softened by a higher and more spiritual influence. A Sister of Mercy, with the gay flapping wings to her cap, the white bands of one of the Sisters of the order of St. Joseph, or even the Salvation Army bonnet would give a livelier look to things. Any of the women of these orders would put into the workhouse just what it lacks."

"And that is?"

"Hope," I answered.

"You are perhaps right," said my friend.

"I am sure I am right. I never felt such a pang at my heart. No, in that work you have failed."

"I have thought so for a long time," said Mrs. Nerwind in a caustic tone.

London.

There are certain droll things in life which are sometimes cruel also, but I have always been able to laugh at them. The latest of these droll things is, that I, an old French woman, should be a member of an English "Woman's Club." It was absolutely unpremeditated on my part, as I consented merely because I did not want to refuse the person who asked me to become a member. I do not regret it now, as it has given me the subject for an interesting study.

There are several woman's clubs in London: among others the Pioneer, the Empire, and the Lyceum. It is to this last one that I belong. The Pioneer is a serious, bourgeois club. The Empire is a centre for colonial women. When they visit the mother-country, they find a home there, a house where they can put up, give dinners, and receive their friends. Its creation was an excellent idea. The Lyceum, as its name signifies, is literary and artistic.

The idea occurred to a young girl to found a club for intellectual women, a place where they might meet each other and even receive hospitality for which they would pay. She talked the idea over with her father, and her father spoke of it to some business men, who considered that it was a good idea as a speculation. A financial society was started, a furnished house was taken in Piccadilly, in the very centre of London, and the Lyceum Club was founded. This is how things are done in this happy country of initiative and of freedom.

The subscription is four guineas a year, and, in order to belong to the Club, it is necessary to have done some intellectual work or to be the wife of a man engaged in intellectual work. This concession is not in the least "feminist," and amuses me immensely. It would certainly have been a great risk, I fancy, to count on paying a rent of £4,000 a year, if only the brains of women were to be reckoned on.

My first impression of the Lyceum was not a pleasant one. On entering I saw a hall porter, a man-servant, and a page. On the ground floor there is a hall, a reading-room, and a com-

mittee-room. On one of the doors "Smoking Room" is written and on another "Silence Room." This injunction seemed to me somewhat impertinent. Grown-up people surely know that it is not customary to talk in a room where people are reading. Then, too, it seems satirical where there are women.

There is a handsome staircase decorated with plants and carpeted with red. On the first floor are the dining-rooms and drawing-room, and on the floor above the bedrooms and bath-rooms. The house is light and well ventilated. It looks out to the Green Park, and might be charming. Unfortunately, the Lyceum took over the furniture of a man's club, which could not have been a very *chic* one. There are enormous leather arm-chairs, heavy furniture, and the beds are those of rigid, hard Britishers, with a bath underneath. This may be suggestive of cleanliness, but it is lacking in elegance. The dining-room, with its little tables decorated with flowers and the white caps and aprons of the maids, is gay-looking.

I have gone into the club several times in passing. I have taken my place quietly, now in one corner, and now in another, enjoying the impressions I received. It is a curious sight. There is a great deal of movement, a busy coming and going, masculine visitors in the hall, women smoking cigarettes, and little groups talking together everywhere. All this does not give the idea of a club, but of a woman's boarding-house. There is a great deal of pose, too, and of affectation. I saw some faces, though, that were bright with intelligence, and a few faces of men who were thinkers. The play of all these forces put so recently into activity here is still unequal and weak, but that does not matter, as it will improve. The flight of all these wings is still uncertain and short, but that little matters, as the wings exist. That is the essential. I have a friendly feeling towards these colleagues, who will, perhaps, be called upon to make a very great effort.

I had always intended to invite my friends to the Lyceum to tea. I did so to-day, by way of a surprise and a reward.

They had been with me to the Zoo, and, as it was Sunday, we could only go in by showing cards. I was so busy studying

men, that I scarcely had time to pay this visit to the animals. If I had not seen them, though, I should have regretted it all the year. Our Jardin des Plantes in Paris is badly kept. I never go there now, and it is a privation to me. I feel such pity and such affection for all these transplanted captives. Truly Nature continues her work both for and against her creatures. In order that scientific men may know all these different forms of life, Nature sends other men to bring them here, in spite of the greatest risks and dangers, and they bring them, so that the magnificent lions, the royally clothed tigers, the strange elephants, the birds, reptiles, and insects are all there for us to study. "So many links in the chain at the extremity of which we are to be found!" I remarked, finishing my thought aloud. "The extremity!" remarked Edith with her caustic expression. "You might rather say that we are the commencement. Just look at our insignificant proportions, our insipid colouring," she added, indicating with a movement of her head the specimens in front of the wild beasts.

"Yes," exclaimed Rodney, "it is quite true that we are not beautiful!"

"Your remarks are a trifle disagreeable!" remarked Mrs. Nerwind, drolly.

"They are true, though," I said. "Our superiority, like that of the automobile, lies in the motor. The more powerful this is in an individual, the less brilliant is the covering of it. Nature, too, will do better in the days to come."

It was I who did the honours of the Zoo, but my friends entered into my interest and pleasure most sincerely. At four o'clock Rodney wanted to take us to one of the little summer-houses for tea.

"Oh, no, I invite you all to my club," I said, very grandly. I was thanked by a burst of laughter.

"Oh, my dear Pierre de Coulevain, you could not give me greater pleasure!" exclaimed Ruby, her eyes dancing with joy.

"This is the first time I have been invited to a feminine club," remarked Rodney.

"And you are invited by a Frenchwoman," added Edith.

"That is the point. Well, everything may be expected to happen here below."

"And particularly what one does not expect to happen," I answered, incapable of refraining from this allusion.

"To the Lyceum, 128 Piccadilly!" I said, and my manner of giving the address provoked another burst of laughter from Rodney.

On arriving, I first showed the house to my friends. They regretted, as I did, that it had not been made more feminine. Mr. Baring declared that there was still an odour of pipes. We went to the smoking-room, took our seats near the window, and the tea was brought to us.

"You must not expect to find good tea and good things to eat, when you visit intellectual women, so that I apologise for this in advance," I said.

The room gradually filled up. There were about half a dozen masculine guests, but they all looked uncomfortable and embarrassed. There were two very pretty women present; they were even elegant with that elegance which is absolutely English. The others were interesting-looking, and not commonplace. They all smoked in a way that proved that the cigarette was no longer a mysterious thing to them.

Mrs. Nerwind looked round the room and then remarked slowly: "Lord! Lord!"

She did not add another word, but we all knew what an inward shock, and what sorrow even, this modern picture caused her.

"Whatever would Frenchwomen think of all this?" asked Miss Talbot.

"They would not understand."

"I suppose that a woman's club would have no chance of success in Paris?" asked Edith.

"A French club, certainly not," I answered; "but perhaps an international club might. If the Lyceum in London succeeds, the idea is to create one in Berlin, Rome, and Paris. The literary and artistic ground is good ground on which to meet. The foreigners will bring Frenchwomen there, they will

bring them into the movement and help them to know themselves. This is, perhaps, the means which Nature will use for accelerating their evolution."

"Do you think that Frenchmen could be admitted into a feminine club without any danger?" asked Rodney, with a mocking smile.

"Yes, if the Frenchwoman learns to respect her club. She will teach him. It will require an education. It is only the weakness of woman that makes man dangerous."

"That is quite true," observed Rodney.

As we were finishing tea, I asked him how it all impressed him.

"Better than I expected it would," he replied. "There is a certain something about these intellectual women. And then, too, I respect the woman who works, who has an end in view."

Ruby's face lighted up with pleasure.

"Bravo," she said with a fond smile. "A good mark for you."

"Oh, I can digest a feminine club for letters and fine arts," he observed; "but a political club, never!"

"That is a nice thing for a man and a future Member of Parliament to say," I observed. "You may be sure that the political club will soon be here."

"Heaven preserve us!"

By way of finishing the day agreeably, Edith invited Mrs. Nerwind and Ruby to dinner.

On entering the restaurant, I looked round for Philip Beaumont. I did not see him and began to feel uneasy. If he refused himself the pleasure of seeing Edith it could only be that his pride was holding out and that was not what I wanted at all. Although it was almost the end of the season, there was a brilliant assembly. Edith seemed to be interested first in one person and then in another. This was probably to make herself believe that she was not awaiting someone. I knew what all this meant from experience. Finally Mr. Beaumont arrived with his sister, a dark, slight, and very distinguished-looking woman. I watched with interest the gestures of the

head waiter, gestures which are often so fatal. He took the new arrivals to a table a little distance from us, but which we could see.

I noticed with pleasure that my friend looked very well that evening. The state of mind she was in gave her a certain brilliancy which was not usual with her. Her low bodice of spangled jet showed up to advantage the sculptured pose of her head.

I saw Mr. Beaumont's sister take her lorgnette several times, look through it, first to the left, then to the right, and then fix it on us. This is a little trick well known to short-sighted persons.

After dinner we took our coffee in the hall where places had been reserved for us. Mrs. and Miss Reynolds soon joined us. I had introduced them to my friends the day after their arrival and a mutual fellow-feeling seemed to spring up at once between the two girls. I wondered whether Jack Baring had anything to do with it.

"Fancy!" said Gladys, taking her seat in our circle, "I have just seen an Englishman here whom I met at Palm Beach, in America, this winter, and a month ago at Newport. I wonder whether you know him, the Honourable Mr. Beaumont?"

"Oh, yes," answered Mrs. Nerwind. "Everyone thought he had come over to marry Mrs. Oswald, one of our beauties. They seemed to be on the best terms with each other. Then suddenly he went off again alone——"

"Oh dear!" I said to myself, and I did not dare to look at Edith.

"Well, I think you might congratulate them both," remarked Rodney. "I only met Beaumont a year ago, but he seems to me much too English to make an American woman happy."

"Ah, you disapprove of Anglo-American marriages?"

"Candidly, yes, I do. It does not seem to me that they could be satisfactory, except in the Colonies, and if the Englishman gives up a whole crowd of his English prejudices. I am sure, though, that one of these days Jack will bring us a nice Canadian girl back with him and then I should be delighted," ob-

served Rodney, looking out of the corner of his eyes at the girl to whom he was talking.

These words, which evidently gladdened the heart of Miss Talbot, made the face of Gladys darken.

"Canadian girls are charming," she said, in a slightly tremulous voice.

Philip Beaumont was just then coming out of the restaurant. He looked round as though undecided to which part of the hall to direct his steps, saw our group, and for a few seconds seemed to be hesitating. Should he come or should he not come, was what he was asking himself, I felt sure. I knew very well what was urging him on and what held him back. Thank Heaven he finally decided to come! He introduced his sister to Miss Baring and to me. Mrs. Nerwind and Ruby knew her already. He was surprised to meet the two American women here. A faint colour came to his face, but otherwise their presence did not appear to disconcert him. He shook hands in a friendly way and expressed his pleasure at seeing them in England.

He then asked me how I had spent the day.

"In a way that *chic* people would not care to acknowledge," I replied. "I went to Battersea Park in the morning, a park that I like very much, but which is by no means fashionable. In the afternoon I went to the Zoo and then took my friends here to my club."

"Do you mean to say you belong to a club? You?"

"To the Lyceum."

"Well, that is good! And you never invited me."

"Should you have come?"

"I would go anywhere with you."

"And people say that Englishmen are not gallant!"

"That is not mere politeness, it is the truth. Will you not give me the pleasure of letting me be useful in some way?"

"Yes," I replied, "I certainly will. I very much want to visit the London Hospital. Could you get the necessary permission for me?"

"Nothing is more easy than that. I know the Chairman of

the Committee very well. I will write to him to-morrow. He will be delighted to show his hospital to a Frenchwoman, for I fancy he has every reason to be very proud of it. Miss Baring, will you not come with your friend?" he added, turning to Edith, and speaking to her direct for the first time.

She hesitated a second, but I knew it was only to give herself time to control her emotion.

"Oh, yes," she replied, with a nervous smile; "if you think your friend would not mind."

"He will be delighted. Well, then, that is settled," he said. "If Mr. H—— is free I shall come for you both, after luncheon, and then leave you in his hands."

"Both of you!" I am sure that he loved saying that, and that Edith was made happy by hearing it.

I admired Philip Beaumont's tact the whole of the rest of the evening. A perfect gentleman is certainly the most agreeable creature that exists. He spoke openly of Mrs. Oswald and of America to Gladys, and he questioned Edith about Loftshall in an ordinary way, but there were certain notes in his voice which spoke volumes.

The conversation became general, and was so entertaining that it was nearly midnight when we separated. There was nothing to prove that the two lovers would come to an understanding; but I felt sure of it, nevertheless. The least spark now will suffice, and I am waiting to see it. Only to think that with all the means Nature has at her disposal I was, perhaps, needed for this spark to be produced. I shall be very proud if this should prove so.

London.

The London Hospital! It is a magnificent unity of warfare—of warfare against the destructive forces which are the enemies of humanity, against all forms of disease.

I am glad to have seen it, as it strengthens my faith in progress and my hope in all things moving from good to better and from better to best, until all is perfect.

Things had all gone according to our wishes. Mr. H——

was free, Philip Beaumont came for us, and we drove to the hospital. We went through the city, where, in spite of the narrow streets and the immense traffic, there seemed to be no difficulty in making our way. The very name of Whitechapel is suggestive of wretched poverty and abominations, but the sight of it surprised me. There are trams running everywhere, and streets in which the sun penetrates. I expressed my astonishment at this.

"Jack the Ripper's crimes stirred public opinion," answered my companion. "As a result the slums were opened up here and you see one of the consequences."

The London Hospital is an enormous agglomeration of separate buildings. The front looks on to a wide road, and a row of trees takes away from its severe style.

The Honourable Mr. H—— received us very cordially. I was somewhat taken aback on seeing so young a man. I do not know why, but I had fancied that the Chairman of the Committee of such an enterprise as this would be an elderly man. Then, too, the gay jesting expression of his face did not seem to me in accordance with the office he held. He glanced at me in a rapid, somewhat inquisitive way, as though a Frenchwoman were a specimen of humanity that did not inspire him with much confidence.

"You know the place, Beaumont," he said, "there is nothing new to show you. Will you wait here for me? When I have shown the principal wards, I will send one of the sisters to accompany these ladies round, and we shall find them again in the matron's room."

"But they will not want to take me back with them, perhaps," replied Philip Beaumont, smiling and glancing at Edith.

"We will take you back, whether or not," I said, by way of coming to the rescue, "if only for the sake of thanking you for having brought us."

Mr. H—— took us first to the matron. In the room which leads into hers, we saw two nurses arranging flowers in glasses for the different wards. I was charmed with Miss L—— at first sight. As I have frequently said, the Anglo-Saxon face

does not light up much. Hers is an exception, and I have very rarely seen so visible an exteriorisation of intelligence and kindliness. She appeared to be delighted at our visit, and sent one of the sisters to go round with us.

It appears that the London Hospital was founded in 1750, and has been constantly enlarged. It now occupies an immense space. It is a little city by itself, but it is, alas! the City of Suffering.

All the improvements suggested by science have been introduced by degrees. We first saw the dispensary, where, on an average, more than a hundred and fifty thousand sick people a year come to be treated and to fetch medicine, etc. After this, we went along some corridors, painted with enamel and tiled in mosaic style, and entered the hospital itself. We visited ward after ward. There was no unpleasant odour, but plenty of light and air. There were flowers everywhere, very white linen, beds not too close together, and everything that the patient could require within reach. One of the invalids had a cage with some birds in it, at the foot of his bed. He had evidently not wished to be separated from his pets, and the sweet little creatures seemed to be singing expressly for all these sick people. There were a great many broken limbs in this ward, the result of accidents while at work. The rough, energetic-looking faces of the men were softened by the influence of the surroundings, and the enforced rest had relaxed the expression of their features. The cleanliness of their Saxon skin, a skin which is wonderfully fine and white, together with their well-brushed hair, showed up the distinction which is peculiar to great races. There was an immense amount of suffering there, no doubt; I could feel it myself in my own flesh, but at the same time I realised how greatly intelligent kindliness can attenuate the cruel things of life. And in all these wards of sickness and suffering, young, healthy women, many of them pretty and belonging to a superior social class, were moving about with a light step, like so many good fairies, bending over the beds of suffering to say a word of encouragement or to render some service. All of them were exquisitely clean and neat, and wore

a white cap and apron. The sisters, lay sisters of course, wear light-blue linen dresses, and the nurses and probationers black dresses. To me they seemed like lieutenants, sub-lieutenants, and plain soldiers. I noticed that the sisters had a more tranquil and brilliant expression. With them, the vocation is certain, and they have accepted their lot in life. There is not such an open expression, nor such a happy smile on the faces of the nurses and the probationers. There are, no doubt, many fights still being fought under those white caps. It seems as though they have not been entirely won over yet to humanity. They are, perhaps, not absolutely resigned yet; but this may be a wrong impression of mine.

One of the sisters was wearing a white glove, and did not seem able to move her right hand.

"That was the result of a bicycle accident," explained Mr. H——. "She was brought to the hospital, her hand taken off, and, while she was recovering, she discovered her vocation as a nurse. She studied and went through the necessary training for a nurse, and she has made herself quite indispensable, with only one hand. Only think what she would have been if she had two!"

"And I am so happy," added the Sister, "that I do not feel I paid too dearly with my hand."

It was very evident that she had found her calling.

The children's ward was quite gay-looking. The little white garments, the bandages arranged artistically, and the extreme cleanliness of everything lessened the sadness caused by the sight of the suffering of children. In order to give these poor little ones as much air as possible, a large balcony has been built upon which the convalescents can play all day long. As I have said before, the English love the species, and during the whole of the visit I was particularly struck with the perfect discipline and the immense effort being made with one end in view: the comfort of sick persons and victory over disease. I could feel that neither the State nor political party spirit interfered in any way with the wheels of this immense machine which is working so freely, and so well. As we went through the various

wards, I noticed that Mr. H—— talked in a lively, humorous way to the patients. He would tease them in a pleasant, familiar manner, so that many a grimace caused by suffering ended in a smile. He evidently knows his patients well. He is a man who is compassionate towards his fellow-men. It seems as though this is quite natural, but in reality there is nothing more rare.

On leaving the principal building we crossed an open space with grass and trees. A few women, wearing dressing-gowns, and covered with warm rugs, were there taking the air cure.

"The air cure in London!" I exclaimed.

"Alas! it is all we have to give them," replied our host. "You are now going to see our Eden," he added.

"Eden, here!" I exclaimed. "You mean after the Fall, then?"

"Yes, after the Fall, but the serpent is no longer here, at least I hope not."

Mr. H—— took us to an enclosure surrounded with walls and led the way to a little door. He drew a key from his pocket, and, opening the door, disclosed such an unexpected sight that Edith and I were quite taken aback. The walls were covered with ivy, there was velvety grass, then there were flower-beds, a streamlet spanned by a rustic bridge, and willow trees, the branches of which dipped in the water. There were also some large trees planted in a semicircle with hammocks fastened to them, and in these hammocks were feminine figures wearing white or blue dresses. All this, enveloped in the faint mist of a beautiful day, in an atmosphere of perfect silence and in the heart of Whitechapel, seemed fantastic and unreal.

"This is the nurses' garden," said Mr. H——, speaking in a low voice. "These are the night nurses. They rest as much as possible in fresh air."

Some of them were sleeping soundly, and others were reading. The style of the garden struck me. It seemed to me as though I had seen it before. Edith recognised it, too.

"Why, yes," she exclaimed. "It is the classical Japanese willow pattern!"

"Ah, that is where I have seen it," I said. "In the original, there are two lovers on the bridge, and overhead in the blue sky two birds kissing each other. Here it is the fraternal kiss, though. How beautiful it all is!"

"You see, we can never do enough for our nurses. There are four hundred of them, and they are worth their weight in gold. Was I not right in calling it the Garden of Eden?"

"Yes, but it is Eden after the Redemption."

"Yes, that is just it!" said Mr. H——, with a pleased look. "I will now show you the present given to us by Queen Alexandra. We bless her for it every day," he added, closing the door of this delightful haven of rest very quietly. He took us into a room on the ground floor. From the ceiling the Finsen light was suspended, and a patient was lying under each apparatus. The nurses were all wearing blue spectacles, and, by means of a special glass, they held the salutary rays over the lupus.

One of the sisters showed me, with great pride, the photographs which proved the disappearance of these hideous blemishes. The combative instinct of the Anglo-Saxon race can be seen in full force in these nurses. They feel real pleasure in fighting with disease and in grappling with it hand to hand. It is this, I feel sure, which keeps them up and gives them such fine victories.

When we had seen the Finsen room, Mr. H—— left us with one of the sisters who was to show us the nurses' quarters and give us tea. Our cicerone first allowed us to inspect her own domain, a charming little sitting-room with a piano, a writing-table, a sofa, a bookshelf, photographs of friends, and flowers. Next door to this was a simple but comfortable bedroom. We then visited the general dining-room, the drawing-room which is gay-looking with its white paint, the library and bath-rooms. All this was thought out and arranged for ladies. The English certainly know how to stimulate good intentions and how to reward service. That is a science of which we are ignorant. It would be difficult to find any administration in France which troubles about the well-being and comfort of the persons employed by it. After this, we went down to the

matron's room and tea was brought in. Our pretty sister poured it out for us.

I looked at Miss L—— and felt the greatest respect for her. Here was the woman who held in her hands the most delicate threads of the immense work I had just seen. She was wearing a white lace cap and a black silk dress, relieved only by some jewellery. She is stout and seems to have a small head, but she gives an impression of happy activity, of extreme clear-headedness, and of strength. During our conversation, I gathered that the great hospital of the East End is under the direct patronage of Queen Alexandra, and that she often makes that the object of her afternoon drive. It is entirely independent of the State, and is kept up entirely by bequests, gifts, and subscriptions. All this supplies the enormous sum necessary for tending annually about a hundred and eighty-two thousand indoor and outdoor patients, carrying on a medical college and a nurses' college. I expressed my admiration to Miss L—— with regard to the feminine delicacy and refinement noticeable in certain details.

"The men and women who leave here must go away with a better idea about life. The necessity of cleanliness is a revelation, probably, to many of them. They take away with them from here, I feel sure, a whole crowd of good germs which will develop when the right time comes."

"They know, at any rate, that they count in the world. And they are so brave. In their most cruel suffering, they neither curse nor swear, out of respect to their nurses. We have had cases over and over again worthy of the greatest admiration."

"I am so surprised," I said, "to see so many well-born pretty girls willing to become nurses."

As I glanced at the sister on saying this I noticed a faint blush come to her face.

"Yes," said Miss L——, "particularly as they have to learn everything, from the cleaning of saucepans to the preparation of food for the invalids, and the art of nursing in a medical way, and this requires three years' study."

"What urges them on to all this?" I asked. "It is not, I suppose, as it is with a Roman Catholic, the hope of future reward, nor yet a high religious idea?"

"Oh, no," answered the matron very frankly, "a great many of them are born nurses. Most of them choose this profession in order to get their living at it, and even with the idea of finding a husband. They often have a veritable vocation, too, in some cases through their love of science, and sometimes they are moved by the love of humanity."

"And which of these two forces gives the best result?"

Miss L——'s expressive face showed that she was thinking seriously before answering my question.

"Neither of these forces would suffice alone. If a nurse is to be really good she must *know* and she must *care*."

"That is asking a great deal."

"Yes, it is, but we obtain it; and if we did not, we could never arrive at what you have seen here."

"What I have seen is marvellous. A hospital organised as this one is seems to me a proof of a higher civilisation than is proved by works of art."

An expression of great satisfaction lighted up the face of our hostess, and just at this moment Philip Beaumont and his friend joined us.

"Have you a cup of tea for us, Miss L——?" asked the latter in his abrupt way.

"Six cups, if you like," she answered, smiling.

"You little think that you have a novelist there," remarked Mr. H——, glancing at me with his mocking expression.

I could not help colouring slightly.

"Oh, do not talk of novelists and novels here," I said. "After all that I have just seen, novels seem perfectly childish and ridiculous."

"Oh, no," put in the matron gently. "Works of fiction are necessary, they are restful after the realities of life. Ask our sister here whether she does not read novels."

"Yes, indeed, and they do me a great deal of good."

"I have just the same sentiment that you have expressed

about society when I am in the West End," remarked Mr. H——. "Everything seems to me petty and devoid of real interest there."

"Oh, come," put in Philip Beaumont; "not quite so severe!"

Whilst we were talking gaily about one thing or another, I was charmed with the sight of the pretty sister, in blue and white, serving the tea, and still more with that of these two society men drinking tea there so simply in the office of the matron of the London Hospital. All this just shows the difference in our habits and customs, and those of our neighbours. It was all so delightful, this little visit to Whitechapel, that we stayed much longer than we ought to have done.

"All I can say is," I remarked, as we were leaving, "that you put on the scales here what counterbalances all the sins of London."

"You must not tell London that," replied Mr. H——, smiling. "You would incite our great city to commit many more sins."

As we were driving back to the West End, I scarcely troubled to observe the attitude of Philip Beaumont and my friend towards each other. Their love affair, their pride, and the inward battle they were waging seemed to me mere child's play after the gigantic battle of which I had just had a glimpse. And then, all at once, side by side with the picture I had seen of these beautiful wards of the London Hospital, another picture came to my mind, a heartrending, humiliating picture, and the comparison of the two absorbed me and kept me silent.

The week before leaving Paris, a young work-girl had been knocked down by a cab at the corner of Rue Castiglione and Rue Saint Honoré. Her leg was broken in two places, and she was conveyed to the Hôpital de la Charité. An English friend and I saw the accident, and we went to the hospital to visit the poor girl.

The entrance to the hospital was enlivened by some spring flowers that the street vendors had spread on the steps to tempt visitors.

We crossed the old paved courtyards around which were

buildings blackened by time. In the courtyard of that part of the hospital to which we were going, half a dozen very common women were gaming with each other by way of recreation. They were wearing creased pink dresses and white aprons, which were not clean. On their rough hair they each had a ridiculous knot of lace. These were the nurses, who were to handle the suffering limbs, dress wounds, and encourage the poor patients. The very sight of them made me shudder and guess what was in store. In a wing to the left was an old staircase. The walls were covered with dust and dirt. There was a landing, a corridor, and then a long, yellow-painted room. There were beds long-ways and cross-ways of the ward, much too close together, and all of them occupied. The various articles necessary for the patient were well in sight. The coarse linen was not only straw-colour, but grey and marked like that of so many prisoners. One of the women was sitting up in bed and on her back I saw No. 1644. That number gave me a pang at my heart. There was not a flower, not a single attempt to attenuate or hide the horrors of disease, not a trace of a woman's thoughtfulness and care. This ward was not mournful, though. It was just the visiting hour—and there were brothers, husbands, fiancés, in their Sunday clothes, a soldier in zouave uniform, and another ordinary soldier. They were all talking gaily with the patients and telling them the news, and the bright, valiant, affectionate Latin soul beamed in all the faces and put some oxygen into the heavy air, some gaiety into the atmosphere. Our little patient was surrounded by her fellow work-girls. On her bed was a large doll dressed in pink, there were also some remnants of silk and some sweets, and all these little presents had brought a gleam of pleasure to her pale face, drawn with suffering. Bending over her bed, I talked to her and expressed our interest and sympathy. I felt, at the same time, in a magnetic way, the impression that the whole scene was making on my English friend, and I wished she had not accompanied me. When once we were outside the ward, she stopped for a few minutes on the landing to dry the tears that were flowing down her cheeks.

"And this is a specimen of Paris hospitals!" she exclaimed. "A specimen of elegant Paris!"

"This is one of our oldest hospitals," I replied, greatly ashamed.

"It ought not to continue to exist," she said, emphatically. "Oh, that ward! I shall never forget it!"

"Well, at any rate, you cannot say it was sad and mournful," I remarked.

"No, it was not, and I must own I cannot understand that. But fancy anyone getting well there!"

No, indeed. I could not fancy that! I was deeply humiliated and I made up my mind to question the first doctor I met on the subject. It was Doctor M—— who first heard my fiery indignation. The very next day he happened to be lunching at my hotel with some patients who were friends of mine. I asked him straight out at table:

"Who is responsible for the organisation of the Paris hospitals?"

"The Public Charity Organisation," he replied.

"I thought as much," I observed. And then I described our visit to the Hôpital de la Charité.

The doctor went on calmly eating.

"Have you seen the Laënnec Hospital?" he asked.

"No."

"The additional ward of the Hôtel-Dieu Hospital?"

"No."

"Oh, well, they are both worse."

"And you doctors do not protest, you do not insist on things being different?"

Dr. M—— shrugged his shoulders.

"We doctors are tired of protesting. I never take strangers now to any other hospital than the Boucicault, as that is the only one which does us any honour."

"Well, then, you are the culprits!"

"Perhaps so, but you can have no idea of the obstacles in our way. We have plenty of intellect and science, we know what is necessary for improving the public health, we know

how to lessen the mortality, but we cannot apply all this. We are always hindered by politics, and we are always running up against them. Politics are ruining France."

"At any rate, you might refuse the help of such women as I saw at the hospital. Physical and moral cleanliness is necessary at the bedside of sick people."

"It is even an agent of healing," agreed the doctor. "We had this with the Sisters of Charity. The people have been persuaded that the Sisters prevent other women from getting their living. With this bait, votes have been obtained, and now we have these other women. They have no scientific knowledge, and they are not disinterested. They are ill-paid, and the patients who cannot give tips are cruelly neglected."

"The Public Charity Organisation is wealthy enough to pay the people it employs though, surely?"

"An administration where there is such waste can never be rich."

"And cannot this waste be prevented?"

"No, because it serves private interests. You must remember that those who supply the hospitals are electors, and they must make their fortune. The Public Charity Fund might be called the Political Charity Fund. There is nothing to be done."

As we were driving back from the London Hospital, all that I have just written came to my mind with startling clearness. On arriving at Claridge's, I had two disagreeable red patches on my cheeks, due to the remembrance of my visit to the Hôpital de la Charité.

London.

The theatre and dramatic art! This is another way in which the mind and temperament of our neighbours are exteriorised, and in all this, too, they are very different from us.

In London, theatre-going costs less than in Paris. Seats can be booked by telephone or by letter, without this costing a penny more. Going into the theatre is just like going into a drawing-room. You have a comfortable arm-chair, plenty of room, and a breathable atmosphere. At a matinée it is pos-

sible to have a cup of tea and some biscuits. It is, of course, impossible to obtain tea in a Parisian theatre. At night, the performance is always over in time for people living outside London to take the last train but one.

In England, managers neglect nothing for making their theatre accessible to the greatest number possible. In Paris, on the contrary, they seem to try to make this impossible. In order to obtain a seat in the orchestra, or in the first gallery, you must waste a morning in going to the theatre to book, for which two francs extra will be charged. This, added to the price of one's cab, makes the ticket expensive. On arriving for the performance, there is a battle, probably, with the *ouvreuse*, a dozen people have to be disturbed, and you must also flatten yourself against a row of chair-backs. After all these tribulations, you take your seat on an arm-chair made for people without legs and arms, and your limbs get gradually more and more stiff during the three hours. There is no ventilation but there is plenty of draught, and the whole theatre is always badly cleaned. The atmosphere gets heavy and poisonous. During the intervals you can stroll about in the corridors or in *foyers* which are dismal and ugly. This makes you very tired, and you go home bad-tempered and with an impression that you have a layer of something abominable on your face—and this, you may be quite sure, is true.

All the European theatres, except those of Paris, have been improved and beautified. Foreigners are surprised at our theatres. The abuse of free tickets, the enormous prices paid to the stars and the tax for the poor, make things very difficult for managers. The person who pays, in a proper way, for his ticket has the pleasure of knowing that he is really paying for people who are much richer than he is. As soon as a Parisian becomes well known, he does not pay a penny for theatres, nor yet for his books. This becomes a principle with him, but a principle due to bad education. If his pride had been properly trained from early childhood, he would have more satisfaction in paying for his amusements than in receiving them as a favour. I am surprised that the theatre-goer who

pays does not strike and ask for this abuse to cease, considering that he is the chief victim.

This evil side has a good result, though. If the public is to be resigned to all these disagreeable things, the performances must, at any rate, be worth it all. The necessary effort is made by the author and by the actors, and this effort is wonderful. Our neighbours manage all the material arrangements of the theatre better than we do; but, when I hear one of their plays, I am distinctly conscious of our superiority in the dramatic art.

In England, nothing is spared in the putting on of a piece. Everything is always very fine, but all that is the chief part of the performance. The *figurantes* are not mere human ruins, as they are with us. Most of them are young and pretty, as beauty is paid for equally with talent. This allows the girl who has received the gift of beauty to lead a good life, if she should prefer it. I have often seen, through my theatre glasses, dream faces in these London theatres. John Bull is not an artist, but he likes beauty instinctively, and he demands it.

I like English actors immensely, but the men better than the women. They are more natural, and they are such gentlemen on the stage. They handle satire and irony in an admirable way, and they are the best comic actors imaginable.

As to the plays, their chief fault is that they are badly constructed. They are childish in conception, full of gaps, and no one seems to see this. As adultery is not liked on the English stage, this theme, which is so rich in effects and in situations, cannot be used by dramatic writers. The theatre, though, for English people, is rather a pleasure for the eye than for the mind. They do not go to the theatre in search of emotion or for psychological and philosophical study. A little sentiment, flavoured with kisses, is quite enough for them. Kisses, however, are necessary. There is much more kissing in the English than in the French theatre, and lip-to-lip kissing, which always rather horrifies me. The English like little sallies of wit, misunderstandings, puns, and above all political allusions. They do not worry the author about the way in which he mixes

all these ingredients, and they do not even ask for a certain amount of probability. Our neighbours excel in exotic plays, Japanese or Chinese, for instance. They are always more or less disconnected, but agreeable to see and hear. The actors are wonderful in such plays.

It is more easy to amuse the English public than to thrill it. The house always remains somewhat cold. One has to look up to "the gods" to see any real emotion. I have seen expressions of extraordinary intensity there, and shoulders shaking with hearty laughter.

Our neighbours are making progress, though, in dramatic art. They will, perhaps, be able to do without us later on. I noticed this season that there was only one French piece being played, and that was *Madame Flirt.*

Yesterday evening, Rodney took Mrs. Nerwind, Ruby, and me to the Gaiety Theatre, to *The Orchid.* This piece is a musical comedy of the kind very much in favour here. It is a series of satirical scenes and situations, extremely disconnected and wildly improbable. A French public would not have put up with it, but everything is admitted here for a burlesque play. The music is pretty, but extremely English in its rhythm. The man with the orchid is, of course, Mr. Chamberlain, and he is the pretext for a satire against Imperialism.

Then comes a satire on habits and customs. The England of to-day is represented by a band of young girls in their night attire, pyjamas, and with their hair in pigtails. Another band arrives on the scene, composed of tall, thin women with their hair in curl papers and the old-fashioned long night dress, fastened up to the neck. This is old-fashioned England. The two Englands finally dance the cake-walk together. The thought of those heads with their halos of curl papers will make me laugh for a long time.

Then there is a Frenchman, the Frenchman such as our neighbours still see him. He is short, rather stout, badly dressed, and with his hair badly done. He is moving about in an agitated way, gesticulating wildly, rolling his eyes, quarrelling with everyone, and ready to fight with his own shadow.

On hurrying away from a big garden the Frenchman, who has challenged half a dozen persons to a duel, knocks against a watering-can. He is furious, and, turning suddenly round, draws out his card and flings it into the watering-can. It was extremely burlesque. Rodney was very much disturbed during this scene. I noticed that his face flushed, and I saw him put his left leg over his right and then his right leg over his left, a sure sign of annoyance and impatience with an Englishman.

"I wish they would stop this," he said.

"Oh, there is no harm in it!" I answered, laughing. "I have seen and heard many similar things, and you, too, probably."

"Yes, but I did not know you then," answered the young man simply, and without the least intention of paying a compliment.

In *The Orchid*, there is a very droll song which has become the song of the day. It refers to a play that has just been given, and this play shows that there is something changed in the Unknown Isle. The story of the play, as it was told to me, is as follows: An old man, who has discovered the cause of the decadence of England, writes it down in a big book, indicating, at the same time, the necessary remedy. He bequeaths this book to his granddaughter, so that she may be the apostle of his theories. She, therefore, becomes a kind of doctor, and in this way enters a house where everyone is more or less ill, and where there is an invalid daughter who has to be carried about in her chair. She takes the whole family in hand, decides on the menus, regulates the quantity of food, puts everyone on diet, and cures every member of the family. In the last act she is begged to tell the secret of all these miraculous cures. She owns that her secret has come to her from her grandfather, and that it consists of taking care of "Little Mary." This name is the one she substitutes for the word stomach, as the latter is one that should not be pronounced in England.

The actors had all kept the secret so well, a thing which would never happen in Paris, that the revelation took the public by surprise, and, not knowing whether to hiss or clap, it decided

to clap. The originality and daring of the subject, as well, perhaps, as the scientific truth, saved the piece. The idea of the stomach playing a prominent part on the English stage is too amusing. The author of the piece, J. M. Barrie, must be a satirist combined with a delightfully calm philosopher. He must surely have been making a bet with himself, and I am glad he won.

When once the thing was accepted, everyone began to talk quite naturally of "Little Mary," instead of the word stomach. On asking a lady after her father's health, she replied: "Oh, he is far from well; he suffers so much with his 'Little Mary.'" As I knew what this meant, I concluded that he had dyspepsia. All this seems to me horribly coarse. The joke is now an old one, and has lost its flavour.

In the song contained in *The Orchid*, if I understood rightly, someone is advised not to give whiskey to "Little Mary," and to wrap her in flannel. All this certainly belongs to the epoch of bridge, of the cake-walk, and the pyjamas.

The Orchid is, on the whole, distinctly light and a trifle shocking, even. The chief actor emphasised the words with particularly eloquent glances and gestures. He could have competed very well with a Parisian comic actor. The spectators seemed to be people of good class. It was more like being in a drawing-room than in a theatre, and all this added to my enjoyment.

Edith did not go to the theatre with us, on account of her mourning, but she joined us for supper, and had reserved a table at the restaurant. When we were all seated, I told her how much I had enjoyed it all.

"I am surprised that you should like our theatre, as you do," she said. "It is so inferior to yours."

"Not so inferior as all that," I replied. "There is something masculine about it, something strong and simple which I like. The satirical note in it delights me."

"We have nothing like your Comédie Française," said Rodney.

"Oh, the Comédie Française is a theatre of elocution," I replied. "The actors declaim there in the most admirable

manner, but they do not act, in the modern sense of the word."

"I am glad to hear you say that," remarked Mrs. Nerwind. "When I pass through Paris I always have a girl with me, and so dare not venture into one of the Boulevard theatres. I therefore go to the Comédie Française, and I do not enjoy it. It seems to me dead. Everything goes by rule, like a ballet dance."

"You are perfectly right, and tradition, most holy and sacred tradition, is the master that lays down the rule for that ballet. The Comédie Française is necessary just as the copy-book is necessary for learning to write. It bores us and at the same time rests us. It serves as a moderator. I should have preferred our Comédie Française being a precursor, and not leaving to others the glory of dramatic evolution; but you see, it is our ancestor, and we must respect our ancestors. Evolution is going on, though, in another theatre, a theatre which, I fancy, is the first in the world—Antoine's Theatre."

"A theatre which is probably impossible!" exclaimed Mrs. Nerwind. "I have not much faith, you know, in evolutions."

"No, it is not an impossible theatre. Real works are put on the stage there, plays which show up crying abuse and the cruelties of out-of-date laws, sociological plays, in fact. Antoine little thought what an immense work he was to do with his little stage, but Providence knew. Dramatic art, with us, may appear to be deteriorating, but it is not so really. Like literature, it is suffering from the effects of the transition epoch in which we are living. Unfortunately, we no longer have authors who insist on having their own way with managers, actors, and the public. Actors will not hear of those fine pieces in five acts, in which the whole play is delicately and gradually developed. This would oblige the actors to appear half an hour sooner, perhaps, than necessary. Society people dine late, and it is not the thing to arrive at half-past eight. Theatres are such unwholesome, uncomfortable places, too, that it is better to hasten matters as much as possible. Three acts are given, therefore, when there ought to be four, and four when

there ought to be five. All these arrangements are detrimental to art. A play nowadays is a kind of libretto that the actors develop by their way of acting. The perfection of the acting makes us forget the emptiness of the comedy or drama."

"It is a great pity," said Mrs. Nerwind, "that your dramatic writers spend so much time on such wretched subjects."

"Some of them imagine they will get more money by such subjects," I replied; "and some authors treat forbidden subjects for the pure pleasure of handling difficulties."

"Well, it is anti-patriotic," remarked Rodney.

"Anti-patriotic?" I exclaimed.

"Yes, last year I read a very interesting book which the French would do well to read and think over. It was a scientific study of French expansion.*

"The author says: 'The Anglo-Saxons are a formidable barrier which the French cannot attack in a direct way.' I agree with him, but this impossibility is not only the result of our material and intellecutal strength, it is largely due to your turn of mind. If your literature were clean and wholesome—if it were possible for decently brought up people, you would acquire immense influence over us, you would make fine inroads into the Anglo-Saxon barrier, because you are bright and gay. Pornography is the greatest obstacle in the way of the diffusion of the French language. We are afraid of your yellow-covered books."

"I know all this, alas. We do not travel, and all that reaches you, from us, shocks you. That is why you know so little of us."

In support of what I had just said, I told Edith the story of the French duellist at the theatre.

"Do you approve of the duel?" asked Rodney.

"For the French, I do, certainly," I replied. "It acts as a break on them. It awakes within them the historic vein and they do not fight duels unnecessarily, I assure you. Foreigners think duelling ridiculous, because men are not always killed in them. That would be rather too much, though. If there were not witnesses there would frequently be accidents. Duel-

* "L'Expansion de la Nationalité française," J. Novicow (Armand Colin).

ling is by no means ridiculous, I can assure you. I once saw all the preparations for a duel between an Italian and a Frenchman, and I can tell you it was a very solemn matter. Then, too, the man who has looked death in the face is always greater after. Fighting with the fists should be left to the lower classes, who do not know how to handle a sword or a pistol."

"I agree with you there," said Rodney.

"All the same," I added, laughing, "that card in the watering-can was an excellent idea. But we really ought to have waited for your brother, so that he could have gone with us to *The Orchid*. He comes to-morrow, does he not?"

"Yes; by the Liverpool train, getting here about six. You will dine with us, Mrs. Nerwind, won't you, and Ruby, of course?"

"You are an angel, Edith," said the girl, her eyes shining with joy. "And we will not say a word about Miss Reynolds to Jack. It will be a surprise for him, and amusing for us."

"Agreed," replied Edith.

There were a great many well-dressed people at the tables near us. The champagne sparkled in their glasses, but it did not appear to have much influence on the guests. The whole room had a very elegant, correct look. Claridge's, compared with other hotels of the same order, seems to be what the Comédie Française is compared with the Boulevard theatres. Claridge's is necessary, though, just as the Comédie Française is necessary.

London.

It is a delightful day, and I have done what people of the working-class would style a piece of good work.

Before starting for my morning walk, I went into the reading-room to glance at the newspapers. I found Mr. Beaumont there, writing a letter to his sister. I told him that I was going out to bid farewell to Richmond Park. He asked to be allowed to accompany me, and I did not refuse his request.

When the cab was rolling along with us, I glanced sideways at my companion and said to myself, hopefully:

"It cannot be for nothing that Lady Rose's husband is here with me."

On arriving at Richmond Park, I led the way to a particularly beautiful part, where the trees are very old. The ferns, heather, and a little thorny bush with bright yellow flowers give a wild look to this little nook. It had been raining during the night, and the atmosphere had been purified by it. There was a fresh odour from the leaves and the earth.

Philip Beaumont stopped short and looked round in surprise.

"To think that there is anything like this so near London!" he exclaimed.

"Society people do not know of it. Hyde Park is all they want."

"Are you sure that it is enough for all of them?"

"For all of them, no. Your friend, Mr. H——, is an exception. He considers Whitechapel more interesting than Mayfair. Do you know," I continued, in a very natural tone, "I was so glad you invited Miss Baring to visit the London Hospital with us."

My companion looked at me, raising his eyebrows in surprise.

"Why should I not have invited her?" he asked. "It seems to me that it was only commonly polite, as you were together at the hotel."

"Yes, you are right," I answered, with mock gravity. "Did you think her much changed? You have not seen her for four years, have you?"

"No, not for four years. Her features have not altered, but her expression has changed wonderfully. She was a girl when I last saw her, and now she is a woman."

"The trial she went through was severe enough to make a woman of her," I replied.

"The trial! It was all her own doing," said my companion. "She forged it all with her own hands."

"That is just what made it so cruel. The day when we met on the terrace of the House of Commons, she asked me, of course, how I had made your acquaintance. You confided in me, and the next day she also did. She told me that after I

had described Lady Rose's death to her she knew she had done the right thing. There were times when she had doubted this, but on hearing everything, she felt she had had her reward."

"Did she really say that?" asked Philip Beaumont, deeply moved.

"Word for word. Ever since I have known her, and in spite of her good spirits, I have always felt sure that there had been a disaster in her life."

"You spent a month at Wimbledon, did you not?" he asked.

"Yes, a delightful month, during which time I was spoilt ridiculously; but it was very pleasant."

I then talked about St. Olaf, and about Mrs. Baring and Rodney.

"And the news of Mr. Wilkes's death arrived just before I left."

"Really!" said Mr. Beaumont.

"I was struck by the dignified way in which my hosts took their change of fortune. I was much more excited than they were."

"I heard when I was with my sister that Loftshall had changed hands. I was very glad for Miss Baring's sake."

"Mediocrity must have been very painful to her," I said. "One can struggle with poverty, but there is no struggling with mediocrity. She is a woman who needs plenty of space, and nothing is more expensive."

"Well, I suppose she is happy now?" asked my companion, glancing at me questioningly.

I am sure he hoped to hear that she was not happy, but I did not give him this pleasure.

"Happy!" I said. "Oh, certainly, both on her own account and for her family and Dick."

"Dick?"

"Yes, the old thoroughbred that she used to ride twice a week at Wimbledon. She bought him immediately. It had been her great desire."

I saw a wave of emotion pass over my companion's face.

"Oh," he said simply; but I knew my words had carried. I

felt this and, out of respect for the inward disturbances I had caused, I was silent for a time. When Philip Beaumont looked at me again, his face was once more impassive.

"Are you really going to Somersetshire on Saturday?" he asked.

"Yes, I am to have my week-end at Loftshall. Is it not delightful!"

"I do not think so, for I shall miss you, and I have seen so little of you."

"Well, if you cared to, you could see more of me. I am staying ten days more in England. Bath is not far from Loftshall. Have you no rheumatism? If you had, you might go there and then show me the place, as I want to see Bath very much."

"I have no rheumatism myself, but I have an uncle there who is crippled with it. He has a flat in Royal Crescent, and I have a standing invitation there."

I stopped short and laid my hand on his arm.

"Well, come to Bath, then, not for my sake, but to make your peace with Edith. You are dying to do this."

My companion's light-coloured eyes could not meet my steady gaze. He looked confused, and a nervous smile was visible under his moustache.

"Do you think I am?"

"I am sure of it. You remind me of a child who will not ask for cake a second time, because he has been refused the first time he asked. You both have something to forgive. You have her refusal, which wounded you, and she has—Mrs. Oswald to forgive. Edith is the one woman in a thousand who would make up to you for the past. She would be a mother to your sons, and she would do the honours of your house. Do you know," I said, suddenly angry, "that when one has all one's life behind one, as I have, and all kinds of impossibilities facing one, on seeing two young people wasting the precious hours, sulking with their own happiness, it seems as though they must be either mad or blinded by the will of Fate. Yes, do you hear, they must be mad or blind——"

"I hear," answered Mr. Beaumont, in a muffled voice.

I then turned away, and forgot my companion for a time, so taken up was I by the beauty of the English scenery. I said farewell to the deer, to the fawns, the rabbits, and all the other animals which peopled and animated the park.

Mr. Beaumont and I only exchanged commonplaces on our return journey; but, on arriving at the hotel, he shook hands with me heartily. How did the inspiration come to me to speak of the purchase of Dick? I have no idea, but, unless I am mistaken, it is through that, that I *served* this morning.

This afternoon we all went to Euston station to meet Jack Baring.

"Do come with us," Edith said in a jesting way. "You will see how good Britons welcome their family. Then, too, between you and Jack, it will be a case of friendship at first sight."

"And I shall undoubtedly have to take a back seat," remarked Rodney, with the smile that always lurks in his eyes.

"Oh, no," I said, "never; for it was so difficult to win you."

At the station the little scene was very simple, but there was a great deal to observe.

There was deep emotion felt by the members of our little group on the platform. Rodney was visibly nervous, Edith very silent, Miss Talbot could not keep still, Mrs. Nerwind's nose showed what she felt, whilst as to me, I was affected, too, by the whole scene. The days of welcoming people back are over for me; but, thank Heaven, I can still enter into the joys of other people.

Our train came out of the dark archway and a head appeared, looking out of one of the windows. In another minute a tall, handsome young man sprang out of the train.

"Welcome, old fellow," I heard Rodney's manly voice exclaim. The two men shook hands heartily, and then the newcomer put his hand on Edith's shoulder and kissed her, saying: "Oh, how good it is to see you all again." He then turned gaily to Mrs. Nerwind and to Ruby, whom he called his "little

sister." I was standing rather aloof, but Edith brought her brother to me, and introduced him.

"This is Pierre de Coulevain," she said to him, "an addition to our family which you will find very agreeable," she added, jokingly. The young man opened his eyes wide.

"Pierre de Coulevain!" he said, slowly. "Why, Madame, you have some friends in Montreal, have you not?"

"I have, the T——'s," I answered.

"They used to talk of you, and I asked them all kinds of questions about you. And then you come to the station to meet me. Oh, no! That is queerer than anything I ever heard."

"And we have still another surprise for you, Jack," put in Ruby, her face bright with gaiety.

"Really? Well it cannot be as good as this," answered the young man, looking at me somewhat shyly. "It seems to me I am to have a series of surprises. Your engagement, Loftshall—Pierre de Coulevain, and now this other one. May I hear what it is?"

"Oh, no; you will know soon. Prepare for a shock, as it beats the record."

Jack Baring is a colonial. This does not mean the same thing as a French colonial. Rodney is insular. The great force of Jack lies in the radiation he gives out, the force of Rodney is his concentration. I felt that during the evening. Slightly taller than his brother, Jack has not such refined features. His fair face, with its straight nose, is lighted up by very bright, kindly, dark eyes, Mrs. Baring's eyes. His hair and moustache have a distinct sandy shade, which goes very well with the bronzed pink of his complexion. His mouth, with its full, joyous lips, has not the fine strength of that of his elder brother, but his chin is a strong one. It is easy to see that he would never flinch from a task, whatever it might be, and that he would carry it through to the end. For the last three years he has been secretary to a mining company in Montreal, and he has spent his holidays in prospecting, exploring, hunting, and in braving all kinds of dangers. It is to this

communion with the great North that he must owe the openness and the physical and moral freshness which one feels with him. When I saw him later on in his dress suit, I was not surprised that my young friend Gladys should lose her heart to him.

The dinner was very interesting. It was curious to see this young Englishman in contact with the people and things of his own country once more, after living for three years in Canada, and after a journey across America. Mrs. and Miss Reynolds arrived late, as usual. Jack's back was turned towards their table, which was at the end of the large room. All this had been arranged by Miss Talbot.

"What a contrast with the Waldorf-Astoria!" remarked the young man, looking round. "You cannot imagine what those big American hotels are like. Their fifteen and sixteen stories are all crowded with people. The lifts go up and down all the time. The telephones never cease, and you can communicate with each other with miraculous speed. The rooms are all outrageously luxurious and are full all the time. People are always lunching, dining, or having supper. The menus are a yard long, and you can have every kind of food that the planet produces. Champagne and wines of every kind are taken like water. There is a fabulous expenditure of life and money. Such caravansaries give a good idea of the organising power of our cousins. That is just the thing to admire in them."

"But what impression does America give you?" I asked. "You have been through it from East to West, have you not?"

"Yes, I started from Seattle, the extreme point of America. It was there that I left your friends, the T——s. I visited all the large cities, and finished with New York. My impression is that of a formidable medley, of a continuous push. Americans themselves have a slang term for the individuals who push. They call them 'pushers,' and I can assure you that there is some pushing. Everywhere you go, you feel a superhuman effort. New York has some gigantic pieces of work, its Metropolitan, among other things. The speed with which buildings are put up is, perhaps, the thing which astonished me the most.

From my window, at the Waldorf-Astoria, I watched an enormous house being built. The iron beams were brought up all ready to be fitted in. Bang, bang, and they were riveted and the various stories then rose."

"Do the houses last that are put up in a minute, with just two or three of those bangs?" asked Mrs. Nerwind.

"Oh, it is only a question of the present moment over yonder; the future has to look out for itself," replied the young man. "The American nation gives you the impression of a nation started at full speed. Will the speed increase, or will it be stopped by a sudden shock? *Chi lo sa?* It is to be hoped it will not crush us."

"Oh, no," answered Rodney. "It is useful to us as a sort of impetus. The Old World has the force of the past, and that counts for something."

"Jack, you like American women, do you not?" asked Miss Talbot, perfidiously.

"I liked those I met in Montreal, and there are a great many Americans there now. They are pretty, elegant, and they have plenty of go and of ideas."

"Edith, you can make up your mind to an American sister-in-law."

The young man coloured, but did not protest.

In order to spare him Miss Talbot's teasing, I asked him more about Canada. He spoke of Klondyke, of Dawson City, of the immigration movement towards the plains of Alaska. He spoke in very good French, and Edith listened with ever-increasing surprise.

"How well you talk French!" she said, at last. "You quite eclipse me."

"I saw a great deal of French Canadians," he replied.

"Well, then, you certainly did not waste your time."

"No, I do not think I did," answered the brother with a smile, which was not free from pride.

It may have been an effect of my imagination, but it seemed to me that Jack was affected by the presence of Miss Reynolds, although he could not see her. He stopped eating, and looked

first to the right and then to the left, like someone disturbed in his mind. Just as we were about to leave the table, he looked round slowly and reflectively.

"How calm it all is!" he said. "The contrast between this and the chaos I have just come through makes me realise the restfulness of Old England."

By a clever manœuvre, Miss Talbot managed to turn the young man's attention to the opposite side of the room to that on which the "surprise" was to be seen. All the time we were taking our coffee in the hall, she kept her eyes on the restaurant door. As soon as she saw the two American women approaching, she went forward, took Gladys by the arm, and led her to us.

"Jack—Miss Reynolds," she said simply.

Jack's back had been turned to the door. He started, and rose to his feet. Oh, the fine colour that came to the cheeks of both young people. Their faces shone with happiness as their hands met. It was a pretty sight to witness.

"My word, this is a surprise!" exclaimed Edith's brother at last, in French. "And to think that I went to Newport to look for you."

"Really!" said Mrs. Reynolds.

"Yes, and I was told that you had started for Europe. I certainly never expected to see you as soon as I landed!"

The two women joined our circle, and the conversation was general at first. Jack and Gladys soon began to talk of Montreal, Ruby and Rodney of a house they had discovered at Kensington, and Mrs. Nerwind, Mrs. Reynolds, Edith, and Pierre de Coulevain no longer existed for them.

Just as we were leaving, Miss Talbot said to me, very quietly:

"Edith will have the American sister-in-law," and then, more seriously, she added: "You are quite right. God alone makes our romances for us."

London.

My last day in London! It is with regret that I write that. The English capital is dear to my heart now. I have observed it so closely.

I went to bid farewell to the things that had most interested me. Among these things are the unfashionable parks to which I have so often gone for my morning walk. Regent's Park, which society people have given up. The birds are still faithful to it, though. I went, too, to St. James's Park and to the Green Park, where sheep, with smoke-blackened fleeces, wander about. All these parks are in the very midst of elegant surroundings, but the poor go there, too, for their share of fresh air, of sunshine, and verdure. One sees vagabonds lying on their backs, smoking pipes; and lovers kissing each other energetically, for in this country everything is done energetically. Women who have no underlinen wear hats trimmed with feathers. They also wear velvet boleros and fur coats in July. And here, in these parks, one sees the people of a free nation, and, on the lowest rung of the ladder, men and women worthy of their freedom. It is this sight which took me so often thither. Then, too, I went to Kensington Gardens, where children of all classes swarm. They literally cover the ground, and among the flowers they look like living plants. Children belonging to the middle class are dressed simply, but in strange taste. Their hygienic clothing, however, gives their limbs free play, and it is pleasant to see the agility of their little legs, and that their muscles are well developed.

Then there are the children of the people, those little scraps of humanity who come from no one knows where, who have no one to watch over them, and no one to fetch them home. They have the dirtiest faces I have ever seen; the dirt is positively comic, as it makes them look like so many little clowns. They neither cry nor quarrel, but just play together quite seriously. With them, I have always seen the stronger ones protecting the weak. They have not been taught to do this. It is the instinct of a male race.

My last visit to that beautiful nursery which London has for its children gave me an impression of *number*, of rough simplicity, and of kindliness.

Hyde Park is nearly empty now. Half of the chairs are piled up on the top of each other. Most of the houses of Belgravia and Mayfair are closed, the flowers in the window-boxes and balconies look neglected, the streets are almost deserted, the carriages are more and more rare, the people one meets have tired faces and a languid look. It is as though they have no blood left in their bodies. London, itself, looks exhausted. There is something ending, something dying, and that something is—the season.

What a curious phenomenon it is, this season. In all great capitals at certain fixed dates, there is a sort of ebullition of social life. Thousands and thousands of creatures are employed to bring it about. Vanity and the desire for enjoyment and pleasure reach the maximum of intensity. This ebullition of life is, no doubt, intended to make the "Wheel of Things" turn more quickly. The forces which we obey govern it, increase or lessen its speed, so that it describes the parabola, it goes up and down. London and Paris live this phenomenon with their respective characters. In London, the movement is greater, stronger, more rhythmic. In Paris, it is quicker, more brilliant, more unequal. The human eye and thought could never see or follow out the millionth part of the effects and consequences of a *season*.

My "season" finished with a five o'clock tea at the Wellington Club, one of the important London clubs, to which members may invite their women friends. About two o'clock, Edith, Ruby, and I were in the reading-room at Claridge's, looking at the papers, when I suddenly saw Philip Beaumont's pleasant face in the doorway. He had not come to the hotel at all the day before, and I was afraid that I had been somewhat rash.

He at once came forward and shook hands with us.

"Although you did not invite me to the Lyceum," he said, "I have come to invite you to my club, the Wellington. I hope

you have no other engagement, and that you will all three come to tea there this afternoon."

"We accept," I replied, promptly. "Tea at a man's club will be one more experience for my collection. Thank you."

"Do you think Mrs. Nerwind would join us?" he asked.

"She could not this afternoon," replied Miss Talbot. "She had to get rid of me even for this afternoon."

The lively, deliberate way in which Mr. Beaumont had invited us delighted me inwardly. It seemed to me as though he had made up his mind about something. He gave me the impression of a man "who had found himself," as Americans say.

I noticed, later on, that Edith had dressed with care, and that she wore her most becoming clothes. I looked at her in she glass, and she saw the smile that came to my lips.

"Englishmen are such vain creatures, as you say yourself," the explained, blushing slightly. "They like us to do them honour."

"That is quite true," observed Ruby. "We must make ourselves as nice as possible for that delightful Philip Beaumont."

Thereupon she touched up her hair once more and arranged her hat at its most becoming angle.

When we arrived at the Wellington Club, our host took us to a wainscoted room, painted white, with red curtains and carpet, and some beautiful plants here and there. There were no pictures and no knick-knacks. The room was soberly and rather severely furnished. Three bunches of beautiful roses had been placed on the table reserved for us.

After a moment's hesitation, Philip Beaumont asked Edith if she would pour tea. There was a certain emotion in his voice which did not escape me.

"Certainly," she said, "with pleasure. Pouring tea is part of my mission in life."

She gave a little nervous laugh as she spoke, and at once began to fulfil her mission. I noticed that her hands trembled slightly. When she passed Philip Beaumont the cup that she

had poured for him, she was obliged to look at him. He took it very slowly, and, unless I am very much mistaken, they made their peace at that moment.

There were not many people in the room, but the hosts and their guests all belonged to the best class, and there was a certain elegance and distinction about the whole scene.

"How solemn it is here, Mr. Beaumont," remarked Miss Talbot.

"You must remember that this is a man's club which entertains women."

"And which has a separate door for the women," I put in, laughing. "There is a certain reserve about the favour extended."

"The reserve is intended as a compliment, I assure you," he said.

"I do not doubt it," I replied.

"Do you not find our social etiquette very different from yours?" he asked.

"Yes," I answered. "I am always surprised, for instance, to see men walk into a drawing-room without their hats. In France, only the master of the house has the right to do that."

"Which custom do you prefer?" asked Miss Talbot.

"Well, men who are accustomed to society, find their hat useful. They hold it in such a way that the objectionable-looking object is not objectionable. As to the other men, they never know what to do with it, and end by placing it on the furniture or on the ground. On the whole, I prefer hats left outside. Another thing that strikes me is that conversation rarely becomes general with you. People form themselves into little groups, according to their preferences or their acquaintance with each other, and talk, as it were, at 'little tables.' Flirting must be very easy in your country."

"There is no doubt that our natural shyness has something to do with that," observed Mr. Beaumont. "An Englishman might say what he thinks to two or three persons, but if a dozen were ready to listen to him, he would be as silent as an owl."

"That 'How do you do?' which you ask each other, and which is answered by another 'How do you do,' seems most comic and disconcerting to me always. Only imagine a wretched foreigner, who naturally fancies that you are making inquiries after his health. He takes the trouble to answer you, of course."

"I have had that experience in the provinces," put in Ruby.

"We say 'Good-morning' to people of a lower class, and we had to find another salutation for people of our own class, but I must say the formula is stupid."

I then began to speak of our departure and of my delight at spending a "week-end" at Loftshall.

"And I am going, too," said Miss Talbot, gaily. "Mrs. Nerwind is obliged to stay in London. A nephew and niece are arriving from India. We English people always have some members of our family *en route*."

Thereupon I spoke of Jack Baring's arrival and of his meeting with Gladys Reynolds.

"Edith is seriously threatened with an American sister-in-law," added Ruby, "and she detests Americans."

This remark brought a vivid blush to my friend's cheeks and a sudden beam to the eyes of my neighbour.

Our little tea party at the Wellington Club was delightful. The whole of the time I felt the Great Invisible at work between the two lovers. It seemed as though I had all the apparatus of wireless telegraphy just near me, the transmitter and the receiver. I regretted that we should be disturbing the sacred work that was going on by our idle words. It was as though Miss Talbot were affected by all this, too, for she kept watching Edith and Philip Beaumont, and I was obliged to turn her attention away from them several times.

"I shall not see you this evening at Claridge's," said our host, when we were leaving later on. "My sister and I are dining out; but, if you will allow me, I shall come to Paddington to-morrow, to see you off."

"I shall be delighted," I said, as I shook hands.

We took Ruby back to Portman Square and went in to say

farewell to Mrs. Nerwind, whom Edith invited to Loftshall for October.

When we were once more in the carriage on our way back to the hotel, I turned and looked round. The wide street was white with heat and dust, and gilded with the rays of the setting sun. On the threshold of the door, between two windows decorated with flowers, I saw Mrs. Nerwind, looking so extremely English. She had helped me with such good grace. I waved my hand to her once more, and she will always remain in my memory as I saw her then.

Loftshall.

St. Olaf! Loftshall! What a difference between these two homes! St. Olaf, a suburban cottage with a narrow horizon and mediocrity. Loftshall, a spacious, dignified country house, and wealth. My friends went from one to the other without any emotion, but they seem more at home here than they were over yonder. I can now appreciate at its full value Mrs. Baring's bravery.

Our departure, our journey, and our arrival here were all perfect. In spite of myself now, I am beginning to consider the different scenes of human life as so many more or less successful pictures. In the sad ones, I see just the same care and forethought, and all that remains within me of the old Eve is rebellious and indignant.

At Paddington Station, we had Mrs. and Miss Reynolds to see us off, and then Philip Beaumont. The last two had come ostensibly to see Pierre de Coulevain. Poor Pierre de Coulevain! she had not much to do with it, really.

Gladys and Jack were sparring with each other gaily until the last minute. They will meet again in Scotland in a fortnight, and then I am sure the romance, begun in Montreal, will continue. May Heaven bless them both!

I invited Mr. Beaumont quite openly to come and pay a visit to his uncle in Bath. Rodney seconded me heartily. Edith began to arrange our hand-luggage in a most energetic way. She was ready to strike me, I fancy, for such a suggestion, but

I did not care in the least. When the train started, I saw Philip Beaumont's light, serious eyes fixed on my friend's face, and I fancied that they were saying *au revoir*.

We travelled alone, and Edith appeared to be entirely absorbed in a magazine. She was revelling, I felt sure, in the sweetness of a feeling that had been repressed so long, but which was now victorious. I did my best to prevent her from being disturbed in her sweet meditation.

The engaged couple were soon talking boating. Rodney's "fleet" had already been transported, of course, from the Thames to the Avon.

Jack and I were left to each other. I turned the conversation on Canada, but it kept wavering in an amusing way between the plains of Alaska and Miss Reynolds, and between Miss Reynolds and Alaska. Poor fellow, how I did torment him!

We had tea at Bath, and then took the little omnibus which had been sent for us, an omnibus drawn by four horses. Our drive consisted in mounting hills and then descending them. As we approached Loftshall, silence reigned between us, and I could see signs of emotion on the faces of Ruby and Jack.

We arrived finally at the beginning of the long Scotch fir-tree avenue, with its two lodges. We drove slowly up it and were greeted with the joyous barking of the dogs. There were flower beds of startling brilliancy and an old Elizabethan mansion. Under the porch we saw our hostess, in handsome half-mourning attire.

Jack sprang out first.

"Welcome, my boy!" said his mother, her eyes bright with happy tears.

The young man put his arm round her, kissed her and hugged her like a child. He then stepped back and looked at her.

"How beautiful you are, mother!" he said, and the accent of deep tenderness, reverence, and emotion was very delightful to hear.

Mrs. Baring smiled and coloured.

"Pierre de Coulevain," she said, turning to me, "welcome

to Loftshall, and you, too, Ruby, dear child. Welcome to all of you!"

For three years the dogs had not seen Jack. I do not know whether they recognised his voice or his race, but they overwhelmed him with their caresses. They then turned and bestowed their favours on me, the dear animals!

We followed our hostess into the house. She led us to what had formerly been the banqueting hall. It is now used as a sort of reading-room, and tea is always served there. It is a large room lighted by bay windows, the ceiling is supported by beams, and at the far end is a gallery. There is also a huge chimney-piece, and there are panels of tapestry, trophies of the chase, high-backed benches, and a wonderful carved screen. The tables and chairs are modern enough to be comfortable, but they harmonise, in wood and design, with these things of another epoch. Through an open door under the gallery, we could see a second hall, with an oaken staircase leading to the bedrooms.

Jack looked round with a trifle of emotion.

"It is all very fine," he said; "very fine, indeed. I am inclined to be proud of the Wilkes family. Now, mater," he continued, putting his arm through his mother's, "do the honours of the house for me."

"And we will go and see Dick," said Edith, turning to me. "Pierre de Coulevain and Ruby can visit Loftshall as they like, afterwards, in their leisure time."

She then took us off to see her pet. On arriving at the stable, she stopped short on the threshold, without uttering a word. The horse looked round and began to neigh joyfully, stamping the ground with its hoof.

"There!" exclaimed its mistress, with an accent of pleasure and of triumph in her voice. She went up to Dick, patted him, and stroked his legs.

"He is in perfect condition," she said to the groom who entered at that minute. "I am very pleased with him."

"I should not have recognised him," I said. "What a difference a little care makes to an animal!"

"Ah, madam," answered the good fellow, "it costs a great deal to be beautiful!"

"You are right, Parker," said Miss Baring, smiling.

We took Ruby to her room, and then went along a corridor to the one reserved for me. On entering this, I was most agreeably impressed. It looks out on to a valley, and in the horizon are the outlines of hills and gentle slopes. A gay note is added to the outlook by a bed of flowers in the garden. The Florentine furniture, brought from Italy by members of the Wilkes family, has the Medici coat-of-arms. The curtains and hangings are of antique red brocade. The table is massive and elegant, with delicate incrustations. I have never had such a beautiful table for writing. It was placed in front of one of the windows and the sofa before the other one. There are three Italian pictures, Madonnas, of course, a few books, and some candlesticks of the epoch. The huge fire grate was filled with logs of fragrant fir wood, and there were magnificent roses here and there. In order to tone down the modern look of the dressing-room, Edith had had some old bronzes brought from one of the attics.

"I kept the Italian room for you," she said, "as I was afraid that the old English four-post bed, with its catafalque-like look, might give you the nightmare."

"Oh, you need not fear, I shall only have nice dreams here," I replied.

"I hope so," she said, and putting her arm round me, she gave me a kiss of welcome, or, perhaps, of gratitude, for she is not given to kissing.

The dinner was a delightful picture of that English family life, simple and at the same time luxurious, which is gradually disappearing or rather being modified. The ceiling of the room is supported by beams, the walls are covered with old oak panels lighted up by candles. There is a huge chimney piece and a carved sideboard. On the long table, with its Flemish linen, there was a profusion of silver, massive china, cut glass, handsome candelabra, and bright yellow and red flowers strewn about. At the head of the table, nearly buried in an imposing

high-backed chair, was the delicate, somewhat severe face of the mother. At the other end of the table was the eldest son—the future squire. Mrs. Baring, with her dull black silk dress, trimmed with old point, and her cap of the same lace on her beautiful white hair, seemed exquisite to me. Before asking a blessing, she looked first at her children, one after the other, and I am quite sure she thanked God with all her soul.

We told her about our London visit, and we teased her about her "squiress" look. We were obliged to talk French, so that we should not shock the butler and the footman. She was not listening very attentively, and I noticed that she did not eat much. She could scarcely take her eyes off the son whom she had not seen for three years.

In spite of myself, I kept picturing Ruby presiding at this table. There would be more gaiety, no doubt, a more lively current of ideas, the moral atmosphere would be lighter, but there would also be less gentleness and refinement. In this world nothing is acquired without something being lost, and we always regret what we lose.

The engaged couple spent Sunday in visiting Loftshall, and the following day on the Avon. On Tuesday, Miss Talbot returned to London. We accompanied her to the station. Standing up in the railway carriage, just before the train moved away, she said, with a droll expression on her face:

"Please don't be too happy without me."

"I shall not, you may be sure," answered Rodney.

"That's a good thing!" she said.

The young man watched the train until it was out of sight.

"You will not have many more of these separations," I said to him.

"Thank Heaven, no!" he replied. "When I am in Scotland, I shall try to get Sir Charles to consent to our marriage in October."

Mrs. Baring and Edith let me have the enjoyment of exploring Loftshall alone. It was a delight to me, and I lingered over it just as an inveterate smoker lingers over a good cigar.

The Wilkes family had lived in the county for the last five

hundred years, but their present dwelling only dates from the seventeenth century. It was built on the site of the fortified farm which was their original nest. Loftshall, like all houses of this style, is built in the form of the letter *E*, the initial letter of the name of Elizabeth. In France, we should call it a *château*, but in England it is merely a house. The kitchens, pantries, and cellars are very spacious and admirably appointed. There are about twenty bedrooms, two drawing-rooms, and a pleasant morning-room. The dining-room, billiard-room, ball-room, library, and gun-room are all well proportioned.

I discovered, among other things, a curious collection of Anglo-Saxon drinking cups and bowls. There was first the horn, either quite simple or richly mounted and chased, that had to be emptied at one draught. This could only be put down empty. It was used for solemn toasts, oaths, and bargains. Then there was the little bowl for women, that could be held in the hollow of the hand. Then came the first opaque and coloured glasses, every kind of drinking vessel in which hydromel, ale, or wine have been drunk, down to the prosaic English tumbler in which a "whiskey and soda" is taken. This collection, together with the old oak and old mahogany furniture by such makers as Chippendale, Adam, and Sheraton, are the valuable treasures of the house. There are pictures and portraits enough to form a gallery, but they are all dispersed through the house, and this seems to me preferable.

The soul of the house is essentially masculine. Women must have had very little influence here. It is very evident that most of the Wilkes family have been huntsmen or sportsmen. The library proves, though, that there must also have been lovers of literature. The spirit of the latter still lingers there, and it is that, I fancy, which softens and warms the moral atmosphere.

The outside of the Loftshall house is a joy to my eyes. The fine mouldings of the chimneys, its roof, its lattice windows, the ivy-covered walls, and the flower-beds surrounding it give it a peculiar charm. The more one looks at it, the more one wants to look.

Two terraces lead to its park, which is not a large one, but very stately-looking. The garden is considered a curiosity. The walls are covered with foliage, there are some fine trees and a fountain in the middle. It is designed after the fashion of the early English gardens, that is, with four square, shrub-bordered beds. Within the border, the bed is laid out in fleur-de-lys, clover, or lozenge design. These designs are filled up with bright-coloured, sweetly scented flowers. The Tudors liked such flowers. There are pinks, roses, lavender, rosemary, sage, thyme, and camomile. It is a regular "parson's garden," and its odour is refreshing and restful. This part of the garden will be my favourite nook.

Loftshall also has its bowling-green. It is a well-kept lawn, with rustic seats enclosed between hedges of cypress. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries people probably played bowls, promenaded about in grand clothes, flirted, and danced here.

There is a sense of harmony which makes itself felt between the cypress, box, ivy, the huge cedar trees, and the old oak and mahogany furniture inside the house. The tones of all these things are like a symphony brought to perfection.

Edith is quite a different person here from what she was at St. Olaf. Her movements always seemed to be cramped there, but here there is room for her, and she moves about more quickly and more easily. She seemed to live with her arms close to her body, as though she feared being knocked by something or by somebody. I am sure that she has a hope now of being happy. May she not be disappointed! I am so afraid of the decrees of Fate.

Yesterday evening, she made a very droll and characteristic remark. My hostess has some dominoes marked with the family coat-of-arms. They are my delight, as they are so pretty and so pleasant to touch. Edith calls them the Wilkes, to the secret annoyance of her mother, I am sure. When we were playing "matador," one fell under the table.

"A Wilkes under the table," I said, stooping to pick it up.

"It is not the first one that has been there, I expect," observed Edith.

Mrs. Baring coloured slightly, and drew herself up.

"An uncalled for remark!" said Mrs. Baring, in a tone that it would be impossible to describe.

There is a visible difference in the attitude of the two brothers, with regard to all of the Loftshall things. Although Rodney respects the rights of the present hostess in all matters most absolutely, it is very evident that he is the elder son and presumptive heir. Jack is only an "outsider." They are two branches of the same tree stretching out in different directions, and it is a good thing.

Jack has become a colonial. The slowness of life and of ideas in Old England stupefies him. He owned to me that he could not endure it all now. It is very evident that his field of activity will be Canada, and he will probably found a family there of English Canadians.

Our hostess takes me out for drives every day. She does the honours of the surrounding country, which is very picturesque. It is a series of valleys with pretty villages here and there, and bare hills covered with short grass which serves as pasture for the sheep. The old church and vicarage are a mile away from Loftshall. Among the farms which belong to the estate, there are some lovely ones, covered with verdure and clinging flowers up to the thatched roof. Over the door of one of the cottages, I saw a bird's nest. I can scarcely imagine our peasants respecting a bird's nest in this way.

As we were driving along in the well-appointed carriage, behind two admirably matched horses, I looked at Mrs. Baring. She was gazing out at the familiar landscape and occasionally she drew a long breath of satisfaction. Her expression was so free from all care and so tranquil that I laid my hand on hers and said:

"You look like someone who has reached home after a long journey!"

"Yes, that is just it," she said, with a happy smile.

For years I had longed to see Bath, but I had never had occasion to visit that part of the world until now. The day before yesterday my friends and I spent the whole day there. It was a perfect feast for my mind.

They took me first along a very pretty road to the top of Beechen Cliff, a steep rock four hundred feet high. Before going round to the other side, I was told to shut my eyes. It appears that all strangers go through this little ceremonial. I closed my eyes accordingly, and did not open them until Rodney announced:

"Bath!"

The first effect was bewildering. It seemed to me that I had an immense crater in front of me. The inside and the outsides of it looked as though they were covered with cubes of grey stone, perforated with holes and pressed against each other. It was only with some difficulty that I realised that these stone cubes were human habitations, and the holes, windows. I gradually distinguished a square tower, the spires of churches, some columns, green spaces, and the winding course of the Avon.

Rodney pointed out a belfrey to me.

"Low church," he said; "lower," he added, pointing to another; and then, stretching his two hands out in the direction of the Abbey, he remarked: "Horrible!"

His gesture and accent were most comic. Mrs. Baring struggled for a moment between her inclination to laugh and her displeasure, but her displeasure won the day, and she looked serious.

We drove down the hill towards the town, and my friends then left me to my own devices, only stipulating that I should join them for luncheon and tea at the Empire Hotel.

Bath had surprised me from the top of Beechen Cliff, but it surprised me still more when I saw its Græco-Roman architecture, its colonnades, its wide streets, and its solemn, classical look. I was perfectly amazed by it all, as it was not in the least what I had expected.

Such as it is, this town came into existence thanks to the agitation or bubbling up of its subterranean waters, and to a bubbling up of life, as I call this, for want of a proper scientific term. This agitation, which continued during the whole of the eighteenth century, was very curious, unique perhaps, and will probably never take place again. It had interested and amused me in the days when I was incapable of understanding its signification. At present, it appears to me as one of those concentrations of human forces necessary to progress—the work of Providence entirely. I have read M. Marbeau's book, *An English Watering-place in the Eighteenth Century*, over again, with this idea in my mind, and it was also with this idea in my mind that I visited the town to-day and, in consequence of this, everything took a higher meaning for me. The phases of the phenomenon of which Bath was the theatre began towards the close of the seventeenth century. The nobility and the members of the Court went there under the pretext of taking the waters, but in reality, I fancy, by way of varying their amusements. The provincial nobility followed their example, and the middle class was not long behind. In this way, classes of society which did not know each other, and which had nothing in common, found themselves together. The musicians of this orchestra had never played together, and were not in harmony at first. They would probably never have played together, if Providence had not sent them the conductor they needed. This conductor was Beau Nash, known later on as the King of Bath. He was a man who was neither well-born nor rich, and not particularly intelligent. In social intercourse, though, he was tactful to a supreme degree. Elegance was a science with him, and he danced wonderfully. He, therefore, took the conductor's stick in his hand and obtained from his orchestra unhoped-for harmony.

In order to get the desired effect, his first idea was to bring the aristocracy and the provincial nobility and the middle class together. It required a certain amount of snobbishness, as, without this, the "effervescence" would have had no force and no effect. He organised large meetings and made certain gar-

dens and promenades fashionable. He not only organised the amusements, but he made the rules for them. He insisted on good order and decorum, would not allow men to appear at balls, "booted and spurred," nor women to come in "little white aprons," as they at first did. He prohibited coteries, calmed down quarrels, would not allow men to wear their sword at these entertainments. He was an admirable Master of Ceremonies always. Under his management, everything was in good style, and elegant minuets were danced in these ball-rooms. He played on everyone's vanity with a skill that won for him uncontested authority, and the title of "King of Bath." He certainly was not an idle king, for he made of his "good town" a formidable rival for the Court, and even for London. People went there from all parts of England. The visitors had to be housed, and Wood, the architect, undertook to house them in grand style. He built regular palaces, laid out wide streets, magnificent squares and parks, and Bath came to life. It was like a fresh alembic for Nature, and Nature immediately flung into it society people, writers, poets, philosophers, theologians, artists, professional card-sharpers, adventurers, and a hundred other elements, and with all this the human amalgam began to bubble up. Like everything else of this kind, as soon as its maximum point was reached it began to diminish.

A little later on, thanks to a legal action, it was rumoured that Beau Nash shared the profits of the gaming tables. His popularity was greatly affected by this rumour, and he was obliged to abdicate. The kings who succeeded him held their sceptre, but had no authority. The aristocracy fell back upon itself, *parvenus* returned to their vulgarity, the dismemberment was soon complete, and the phenomenon was a thing of the past. It had, nevertheless, produced the effects for which it had been intended. It had refined certain people, it had modified some habits and customs, it had widened the intellectual horizon, enriched literature and art, and considerably helped progress.

This effervescence was very English in its characteristics. There was a certain spirituality to be found in it. Society

people went to service at the Abbey every day after breakfast, and Wesley converted some of them.

No other town possesses such a book of illustrious visitors as Bath, and at present it is putting the names of these visitors on the houses they inhabited. Its walls will tell the history of the eighteenth century in England.

Bath survived the desertion of the stream of people who had brought it into existence, and this is largely due, not only to its health-giving waters, but to the architects who gave to it the stamp of grandeur and of durability. The two Woods, father and son, seem to me to have belonged to that number of Englishmen who could not write their own language, but could, nevertheless, write Latin verse. They executed, in stone, their dream of classical beauty, but unfortunately it was never finished. Those Græco-Roman lines, the semi-circles of colonnades, such as the Circus and Royal Crescent, with their chapters in Doric, Ionic, or Corinthian style, are astonishing in England, but at the same time they are charming to the eye.

It is a City of Palaces, and the idea of its former illustrious guests has attracted a crowd of people of modest fortune, who wish to have surroundings as elegant as possible without paying much for them. They are able to say that they are living where Queen Charlotte, William Pitt, Thackeray, and plenty of other noted people lived. Snobbishness created Bath and snobbishness has saved it, so that we must acknowledge that it is a force.

It seemed to me that the town was healthy and prosperous. It has magnificent parks, gardens, and walks, plenty of outdoor sports, fox-hunting in the neighbourhood, fishing, and boating. There are men's and women's clubs, too, colleges, two theatres, some fine hotels, the Abbey, and thirty-seven churches, two of which are Catholic. All that is necessary for body, soul, and spirit can be found there, and I have never seen such a complete set of tools anywhere else.

The bathing establishment is very well appointed, and has every modern improvement. The Corporation certainly seems to look after the comfort and pleasure of the visitors. This is

such a rare thing that it seems worthy of mention. I saw the two baths, the Cross Bath, and the King's Bath, where the social *élite* of the "great century" used to come and splash about for an hour every morning, the men wearing coats and trousers, and the women dresses of coarse holland which did not cling to them, and straw hats. They were all painted and powdered, and used to have little wooden trays near them, with their handkerchief, snuff-box, and box of patches. The present-day bathers, with their braided woollen costumes and their oilskin caps, swimming about energetically, seemed to me far from beautiful.

I visited the large ball-room, where minuets used to be danced, and then I went to the Grand Pump Room to sit down for a time. I closed my eyes, and in my imagination I saw the more modest Pump Room of the eighteenth century, with its eighteenth-century people in wigs and three-cornered hats, knee breeches, and dress coats, head-dresses, and full, shapeless dresses. I could see all these people with their slow, graceful movements and conventional gestures, exchanging lively conversation, intriguing or discovering intrigues, discussing their losses or gains at cards. I could see the "King of Bath" moving about among his subjects, saying a pleasant word here and there, and putting everyone in a good humour. It seemed to me as though I could even hear the peal of bells which welcomed the arrival of every traveller, causing the greatest excitement and curiosity. The idea of church bells being employed for announcing the arrival of visitors to a town! Will Beau Nash ever be forgiven for that?

I opened my eyes again, and I saw Beau Nash in a niche, a room comfortably and luxuriously furnished, tables covered with newspapers and magazines, some pretty girls at the Pump Room bar, and the twentieth century with its flannel suits and tan boots, short dresses, blouses, and sailor hats. It seemed to me prosaic, but active and free. It has not a graceful carriage, but it can go along easily and cover a great deal of ground. Its expression is strained, but there is thought and individuality. Altogether, I like this twentieth century. I am

proud to belong to it, and regret that it can only be for so short a time.

I drove about and walked for some time, resting now and then in the parks. All day long I could feel the presence very distinctly of Beau Nash, of the two architects, the Woods, of Ralph Allen, the famous citizen who was so generous, the owner of Prior Park, where the finest intellects of the eighteenth century used to come to hold communion. These were the men, really, it seems to me, who created Bath.

At the age of six, I wrote my first letter on some paper stamped with the name Bath. I suppose it really indicated a superior quality. It was used as a slang word, meaning distinguished or *chic*. How did it ever reach our Paris slums in this sense? We know that the wind carries along seeds, but what force transports words?

The Empire Hotel has a very fine view, and, as we were taking tea there, Rodney suddenly said to me with a mischievous smile:

"I suppose that there is nothing less like an English watering-place than a French watering-place?"

"You mean," I said, "that the latter is not respectable? Well, you are quite mistaken. With the exception of the few important watering-places, where there is gambling and all that accompanies it, the French places of this kind are very restful. Most of the fathers and husbands for whom a lively watering-place has been prescribed, deposit their families there. Marriageable girls do their embroidery at their mother's side, and the young men, looking very bored and cross, talk of unpleasant subjects in little groups together. There are a few tennis courts and even golf links here and there, but real sport which makes good comrades and which creates lively and wholesome excitement does not yet exist. The *petits chevaux* are the only diversion. Last year I was at a place of this kind, and I said to myself that foreigners have no idea how extremely reasonable we can be."

"In spite of its sports," observed Jack, "Bath strikes me as being fairly melancholy."

"Can you imagine what it would be without sports?"

"Frightful!" declared Edith.

"Its pale-coloured foliage, its grey stone, and its architecture certainly give it a cold look," I admitted.

"And there is an aggressive austerity about it," added my friend. "It must be 'low church,'" she said.

"It fancies itself obliged to expiate its frivolity of yore, perhaps," suggested Rodney.

"Ah, it was somewhat frivolous and light," I said, and then, turning to Mrs. Baring, I added: "While I was out I compared your smart society of to-day with that of the eighteenth century, and I consider that it is less immoral than the society which preceded it. Nature always seems to be repeating herself. In reality, there is always evolution and Nature is constantly improving people and things."

"I wish I could believe that," she answered. "It would require plenty of faith, though, for I must confess I do not see things as you do."

"Have faith," I said, putting my hand on to that of my hostess. "Have faith in progress . . . "

All three of the young people thanked me with their looks and smiles for defending the present.

Loftshall.

Well, I fancy I have really seen conjugal affection to-day, the real thing, that which is based on unchangeable affection, on the communion of ideas and aspirations.

There was a children's fête at the W—— parsonage, and Mrs. Baring took me to it.

This house is only separated from the old church and cemetery by the road. On one side it is covered with ivy and on the other with roses, jasmine, and clematis. In front of the drawing-room, the dining-room, and the library is a well-kept lawn bordered with flowers and beautiful trees. Family portraits, some fine Gobelin tapestry, and carved furniture give a warm, hospitable look to the hall. What expression there is in an English hall! It is never deceptive, either.

The rector is a gentleman, a well-born man. That was evi-

dent by many details. I complimented him on his beautiful rectory.

"I arranged it all for my wife," he said, "and I had plenty of time, for I had to wait for her as long as Jacob waited for Rachel. All those years of happiness lost, you see," he added. "I spent them in beautifying the house so that she should never regret her own home, and I fancy she has not regretted it." He smiled as he said this with true masculine conceit.

Mr. Lyndall showed me his study. It is a charming long room, with windows looking on to distant hills and beautiful meadows. The room is full of books, and on the walls are hung drawings and engravings. There is a full-length portrait of his mother at one end, and there are huge arm-chairs and a sofa. In a glass vase a magnificent rose was coming into full bloom, and I guessed whose hand had placed it there. It is in this little sanctuary that the rector prepares his sermons, smokes his pipe, and plays whist with his wife and curate. I have rarely seen so inspiring a study. The little painter and brush behind my forehead began at once to brush in the whole of this scene. The idea of a French novel, a yellow-back, having birth in an English rectory!

Mr. and Mrs. Lyndall were giving a party to the children of the parish. There were about a hundred and fifty altogether, and all sorts of games had been prepared for them. When they were all in the schoolroom adjoining the church, ready for tea, I went with the rector to see them. Every table had plates with piles of bread and butter and cake, pretty blue-and-white cups, and flowers. Mrs. Lyndall, Mrs. Baring, and a few other ladies were ready to wait on the children. My host took off his hat and started a hymn with more vigour than correctness.

We then left them to their tea, and Mr. Lyndall took me to visit the church. There are some very fine windows in it, and I noticed the affectionate way in which the rector looked at them and at his church generally.

"You see," he said, "I have the church door always open through the week, and such an innovation somewhat disturbed

and shocked people. When I first came it was very 'low church' here. I thought my parishioners would desert me wholesale when I spoke of the communion of saints. Some of them did leave the church, but I have succeeded in educating the mentality of the others. Many of them now pray for their departed friends, and find consolation in that."

Such words show better than anything could how weak the clergyman's authority is in England over his flock, and what a lack of unity there is in the religion. When we were outside the church again Mr. Lyndall stopped in front of the gardener who was tending a sickly-looking vine.

"Smith," said the clergyman, "did you know that there was a fig-tree in the cemetery?"

"No, sir," replied the man.

"Well, I discovered one this morning. I can truly say now that I rest 'under my own vine and under my own fig-tree.'"

"Yes, sir," replied Smith, gravely, touching his cap.

I could not help smiling, for I guessed that these Biblical words were uttered specially for my edification. Oh, human vanity!

We had tea in the garden, under the shade of a huge parasol and literally in the midst of flowers. The guests were the curate, a young man with a frank, happy-looking face and a singularly pure expression, two girls brilliantly fresh-looking, three ladies from houses in the neighbourhood, including Mrs. Baring, and two of those terrible old maids known as "parsonage cats," women who interfere with all the parish work and try the patience of the clergyman most cruelly.

At all the English receptions to which I have been invited, I have always felt very distinctly the waves of sympathy or antipathy caused by my nationality. Certain persons seemed drawn irresistibly towards me, and others kept away as though influenced by a sort of instinctive hostility. As a rule, the Francophiles had bright faces and quick eyes; the Francophobes, dull faces with a hard expression and dry lips. I have given proof of my impartiality always hitherto, so that the truth of what I have just stated will probably be accepted. It requires

a special mentality to comprehend Madame la France. To all those who have not this mentality she must seem odious and unbearable. All this is the play of the human affinities, of the various elements of which we are composed. With us we have Anglophiles and Anglophobes in just the same way. With the same equity I would add that the former are infinitely more congenial. In this provincial place the phenomenon took place, and very forcibly. I was like a foreign body, conscious, though, of the effervescence I was producing. I felt distinctly that the curate, one of the girls, and one of the ladies were Francophile. As to the other persons, well, they were not at all Francophile.

The ecclesiastical couple interested me very much. Mrs. Lyndall was wearing a wide-brimmed garden hat trimmed with red geraniums, a violet skirt, a light silk blouse, and heavy Indian jewellery on her neck and arms. She appeared to be delightfully unconscious of the lack of style and taste in the cut and colouring of her dress. I forgot this myself when I looked at her. Her fair hair was turning grey. She was a woman of the Rubens type, still pink and white, with blue eyes slightly protruding, an arched nose, a wide, wholesome-looking mouth, and an expression of kindliness and strength.

The rector was dark, with a ruddy complexion, quick, piercing eyes, and the lips of a man who knows what is good.

The eyeglass that he was wearing, and that he kept adjusting in a droll way, gave him the look of a society man. He did not take tea, but several glasses of sherry and some biscuits. The half-religious way in which he drank the gold-coloured wine showed that he was a connoisseur.

He confessed that he had never stayed in Paris. He had merely passed through it.

"You were always afraid of singeing your wings, no doubt," observed Mrs. Lyndall.

"No, my dear," he replied, seriously; "thanks to you, they are incombustible. The fact is, I do not speak a word of French, so that it would have been humiliating and embarrassing to stay in Paris."

He teased his wife several times on the subject of the arrange-

ments of their children's party, which had really gone off very well. I have noticed that an Englishman rarely teases anyone that he does not care for, or who does not really interest him. Teasing is frequently his way of concealing his real sentiment. With this couple I could see, underneath the attacks and retorts, the deep current of their mutual affection. It was very evident that they were really united "for better, for worse."

I could not help smiling, for my dream, when a girl of fifteen, suddenly came to my mind. My ideal, then, was to marry a very handsome clergyman, to have a very poor parish, and six children. I saw difficulties in *buying* six children with a very poor parish, but all the same I used to dream of my six living dolls. This fancy of mine, due, no doubt, to the reading of English novels at an early age, came to me now as fresh as ever. Since my childhood, I must have been entirely renewed several times, but this idea had remained hidden away within my brain. There must be something then within us that is not renewed like the tissues of our body.

I ought to be thankful that Providence never granted my wishes, for a clergyman's wife has a very difficult position. The best of them is very rarely popular. She may feed, clothe, and nurse the poor of the parish and she risks contagion for their sake, but she can never do enough. She usually has enemies in her most intimate circle of friends, for there are all the women who had intended themselves to marry the vicar or the rector. She loses her social prestige without ever winning the prestige of the Catholic Sister of Charity. Many clergymen's wives certainly take upon themselves a great deal of authority, dictate, and lay down the law. They are hard, inflexible, more Royalist than the King, and become regular *bêtes noires*. It takes a well-born woman to rise to the situation. I feel sure that Mrs. Lyndall is such.

I expressed my surprise at the number of churches in Bath.

"It is easier to build churches than to educate the mind and soul," replied the rector.

"I am on very good terms with the priest of St. Mary's, the Catholic Church," he added.

"Are you not rather too eclectic, dear Mr. Lyndall?" remarked one of the old maids, with acidulated sweetness.

The clergyman raised his head slowly, moved his eyebrows by way of adjusting his eyeglass, and looked at his parishioner.

"My Master was," he answered, in a dignified tone, raising his hat as he spoke. This little passage at arms amused me and edified me with regard to the intercourse between the shepherd and the sheep.

I glanced round several times at this charming picture of English life. The curate and the two girls had taken their cups and a plate of cake to a garden seat near, and were talking gaily together. Two terriers were playing near us. In the meadow a pretty Jersey cow and two ponies were grazing. The house, with its walls bestarred with flowers, was bathed in warm sunshine, and seemed to be supported by the old church at the back of it. A great peace seemed to reign over all, and I brought away some of it with me.

As we were driving back to Loftshall I compared this delightful rectory home with the priest's house. The latter is bare and cold; its walls never hear any words of conjugal love nor yet the voices of children. It seems like the vestibule of the temple. In its atmosphere there is a vague odour of the incense brought from the altar and an odour of the bachelor who takes snuff and keeps his windows closed. All this gives an impression of solitude. There are neither flowers nor animals. It is empty of all that makes life pleasant, but it is full of an elevated ideal, and that ideal is enough for some people.

I had never realised before the difference between the clergyman and the Catholic priest. The former is the minister of the Gospel, and the second believes that he is the Gospel itself.

The clergyman is generally a well-born and well-educated man. He enters the Church, in which benefices still exist, just as another man goes into the Army. His mission, which is frequently a vocation, too, is to teach the Christian doctrine,

to lead men's thoughts to God, to help them spiritually and materially. There is nothing supernatural in all this. He may marry, have children, go in for sports, smoke, take part in any of the amusements that are sanctioned, and in the pleasures of this world. When I see a curate coming back from tennis with his shoes and racket on his cycle, and when I see him flirting, I am not shocked. He eats the bread and drinks the wine of the Sacrament, he takes communion "in memory of the Master." Worship of this kind does not require him to soar between heaven and earth.

The Catholic priest in France is rarely a gentleman in the English sense of the word. He is frequently the son of peasants who have wanted to make a "monsieur" of him, or else he is a man who has an ecclesiastical vocation. He never acquires that refinement which comes from race and education. He is careless of himself, dresses poorly, and lives still more poorly; but in spite of all this he has a prestige which the clergyman never has. He has the tonsure, he wears priestly dress, he goes to the altar, and calls down the Divine every day into the Host. The supernatural sets him apart; it communicates to him, without his realising it, a mystical force which works on a crowd of brains and moves them to devotion and sacrifice for the good of humanity. His priestly office transfigures him in the eyes of the great lady as in the eyes of the poor woman of the people. He is the "superman," though in quite another sense from the term used by Nietzsche.

The clergyman gives a note of natural, pure, and righteous life. The Catholic priest gives a note from the Beyond. It is impossible to know whether it is the right one. He does not know himself. All these differences do not matter. Those who make great efforts are always worthy of our respect and admiration. For certain sheep a clergyman is necessary as shepherd, and for others the Catholic priest is necessary.

Such a fine, beautiful surprise! So fine, and so beautiful that I consider it almost a reward.

The day before yesterday, I started for my morning walk with Jack, the dog, Bob and two collies which belonged to the Squire, and which his heirs have adopted. Edith was out riding, Rodney and his brother were probably boating.

My footstep was not light, for I was thinking of my approaching departure, and a sort of vague uneasiness had taken possession of me. We had left London now a week, and had not heard a word from Philip Beaumont. I wondered whether he had discovered that Edith was not necessary to his happiness, and I was just thinking that my stay in the Unknown Isle would end, after all, with a great disappointment. I felt humiliated personally, for I had certainly left no stone unturned. Edith's attitude did not make me any more easy in my mind, for I had never seen her so gay and lively. The previous evening she seemed even to exaggerate the liveliness of her conversation. I wondered whether she were not acting, and all these ideas prevented me from enjoying to the full the beauty of the valley and the surrounding hills, the effect of the faint mist which had hidden the sunbeams for the time. I was going through an old village, where there is a little inn dating from the fifteenth century, and I had not admired all this as it deserved. I rested for some time on a bench outside a cottage, the inmates of which knew the "French lady," and then I took another road to return to the house of my friends. After going out of my way several times to avoid the terrible stiles, I went into a little wood which leads to the Loftshall gate. Almost at the other end of the wood the dogs set up a gay barking and, supposing that they had met with a member of the family, I hurried on. I did not see anyone, but there was a turn a little farther on. The barking was now more vigorous, the dogs were evidently delighted. Suddenly under the trees to the right I saw two figures on horseback advancing, and I recognised Edith and Philip Beaumont.

This was indeed a joyful surprise. On seeing me they put their horses to a gallop and had soon joined me. They dismounted, and Philip's first words were:

"It is *yes!*"

His eyes shone and his lips trembled with emotion.

"Heaven be thanked!" I exclaimed.

"It was yes," said Edith gravely, "because the 'no' cost me too much suffering to want to say it again."

I admired this frankness, for I knew she was trying to heal the wound she had formerly made.

"But where have you sprung from?" I asked the *fiancé*.

"From Bath. Two days after your departure I made arrangements to come to see you."

"To come to see me!" I said. "Oh, that is good!"

"You and Edith," he continued. "My sister and I were suddenly sent for, though, to Beaumont. My father was taken ill, and it was not until the day before yesterday that all danger was over."

"And you met like that, accidentally?" I asked.

"No; I had written to ask for an interview, and I was allowed to have it outdoors."

"Dick had been present last time when things went wrong. It was only fair that he should be there to-day."

"Well, all I can say is that if you had confided in me you would have spared me a great deal of anxiety," I said. "I began to think that you would not make peace."

"I knew you liked surprises so that I prepared this one for you."

The *fiancé* looked very happy, the dogs seemed to be possessed, for they jumped up and barked with delight; the horses kissed each other, and I was very, very glad.

"Now we shall have to prepare my dear mother for the shock," said Edith to Philip. "Pierre de Coulevain and my brothers have spoken to her of you, and my father knew your uncle very well. Come to tea this afternoon and try to win her heart."

"I will try," he answered.

He then held out his hand to me.

"Gently," I said, holding mine up first. "I remember Rodney shaking hands just as he was engaged to Ruby. You may be still worse."

In spite of my observation the hand clasp was somewhat painful, for he was in a great state of joy and excitement.

"I thank you in English fashion," he said, "without many words. You have been my Providence."

"No," I answered; "merely the agent of your Providence, and I never had a more agreeable mission."

He then shook hands tenderly with Edith, and, springing into his saddle, rode away. She watched him out of sight, and then, turning to me, said:

"The dear boy!"

These had been Lady Rose's words, too, and they must be the words that best express an English woman's feelings for the man she loves. It was always the term of endearment I heard most frequently in England. There is something maternal in the epithet which makes it very natural from the lips of a woman.

Edith put her arm through Dick's rein and we walked along in silence. I would not disturb those first moments of happiness by a single word. On approaching the stables a groom came forward. Edith put her cheek against the horse's head and I heard her say in a whisper:

"Oh, Dick, I am so happy!"

An hour later, when we were in the hall, Rodney arrived in boating dress, bringing with him an impression of fine vitality and fresh air.

"Edith," he began, "whatever were you thinking of? Why did you not keep Beaumont for luncheon? I met him, and he said he had ridden with you to the gate. Nice hospitality, that! I felt quite ashamed."

"I invited him to tea." The blush which covered his sister's face at his first words, and her whole expression, had a most comic effect on the young man. With his hands in his pockets and amazement visible in his eyes, he gazed at her in silence for a few seconds. He then began to whistle, "God Save

the King," very quietly, and, turning on his heels, left us suddenly.

"Wretched boy!" exclaimed my friend, smiling through her emotion.

"Well, at any rate, he understands," I remarked gaily.

Mrs. Baring welcomed Philip Beaumont as my personal friend with a cordiality that was evidently intended as an honour to me. She invited him to luncheon for the following day. During tea and all the rest of the afternoon, Rodney continued his psychological study. It brought a gay light into his blue eyes, and a mocking smile to the corners of his mouth. Jack, who is very observant also, had some suspicions of the truth.

"Edith and Beaumont seem to be very good friends," he remarked, after the departure of the latter.

"Yes," I answered, laughing.

Mrs. Baring saw nothing and guessed nothing. Parents alone are blinder than husbands.

Edith came as usual with me to my room to have a talk. She sank down on an arm-chair evidently nervous and preoccupied.

"I wonder how I am going to announce my engagement to 'the Squiress,'" she said. "She has no idea of it, and she will, perhaps, be hurt at my silence. Dear mother! In spite of her goodness and of our love for each other, I have never felt quite at ease with her. It is somewhat embarrassing, you know, to have a mother who is too perfect."

"It would be still more embarrassing if she were just the opposite," I remarked.

"Yes, you are right; I am very ungrateful. You see, we Anglo-Saxons dare not penetrate into the hidden depths of life. We stay deliberately on the surface. Our intentional ignorance is our virtue. During my stay in France, I discovered that you are much less superficial than we are, although you do not attempt to show that you are. You are not afraid of diving into the depths."

"No," I answered, smiling. "When we dive we get mud,

it is true, but we often make some very fine discoveries. Pearls and precious stones are never to be found on the surface."

"That is very true."

"It seems to me that practical people are the very ones that know life least."

"Yes, because all their attention is bestowed on the machinery that produces. We certainly are practical people. Take mother, for instance, and she belongs to the majority. She will die without having the least idea of half the evil that takes place in the world, or half of the good that redeems the evil. She would have understood my misery when I considered it my duty to refuse Philip Beaumont, and she would have sympathised with me, but she would never have understood my revolt, the struggle that followed, the temptation of happiness, and I do not think that she would have excused all that. If I were to show her the formulas for the examination of conscience in our Catholic prayer-books, she would be horrified."

"Yes, I am sure she would. I can understand now the courage you needed when you informed her of your change of religion. What you have to tell her now will be less difficult, though, as I should think, she will be pleased."

"Yes, but tell me just what you think. Do you imagine that she fancies I shall never leave her? It would be terrible if that were so."

"Oh, you can make your mind easy on that score. She is not one of those mothers who wish to take back the life they have given. Devotion to others, and abnegation, are innate with her. And then, too, in spite of her perfection, she is not exempt from worldliness. She likes dress and well-dressed people, she likes things as they should be. She will like to see her daughter become the Honourable Mrs. Beaumont, a future Viscountess, and the mistress of Beaumont Castle. When the first surprise is over, she will feel real happiness and great satisfaction about your engagement."

"It is just this surprise that I should like to soften for her. I am afraid of being too abrupt. Could you not prepare her mind?"

"With pleasure," I answered. "It is always a pleasure for the novelist to work with a living model."

"Well, then, I shall leave you alone with mother to-morrow morning after breakfast, and you can prepare the way for me, just as you are inspired."

"Never fear," I answered, "to-morrow there will be another happy woman at Loftshall, your mother."

"Heaven grant it!" she said, and then getting up she put her arm round me and kissed me.

"You are a trump!" she said with quivering lips, her eyes misty with tears.

My task the next day was not very difficult. It often happens in life, just as in cards, that your adversary plays into your hands.

Edith went out riding, and met her *fiancé*. The luncheon was very lively. I had never seen Mrs. Baring so talkative. She evidently liked Philip Beaumont, and I saw her look at him and then at her daughter as though she instinctively associated them with each other. Rodney continued observing things, and it was evident that the conclusions he drew were satisfactory to him. After luncheon, as the heat was very great, the men took refuge in the billiard-room to smoke, as usual. Edith went out to give Dick his sugar and bread. Mrs. Baring took my arm, and we went together into the little morning-room, which was now shady.

"Your friend is delightful," she said, when we were sitting down. "I am so pleased to have met him."

"He is a gentleman," I said. "His manner of acting in the circumstances of which I told you gave me the highest opinion of his character. He is just the sort of man Edith ought to marry," I added, coming straight to the point.

Mrs. Baring started, and a faint colour came to her cheeks. I was convinced that she had had the same idea.

"Oh, as to marriage," she said, "Edith has not been lucky."

"The most cruel events sometimes lead to happiness," I said. "Should you like her to marry?" I asked.

"Oh, yes, I should be very happy," she replied.

"There, I wanted you to say that."

"It is my great desire," said Mrs. Baring. "Loftshall will belong to Rodney. Edith might go on living here, but it could never be her home. I should like her to have a home of her own."

"She will have one," I said, "and sooner than you imagine."

Mrs. Baring looked at me with a startled expression in her eyes. I drew my arm-chair a little nearer and said quietly:

"You do not imagine that Pierre de Coulevain was sufficient attraction for bringing Mr. Beaumont to the neighbourhood?"

"Why not?"

"Well, it was scarcely likely. If Pierre de Coulevain had not had a friend named Edith Baring, I fancy he would not be here."

"Do you really think this?" stammered my hostess. "Well, then, it must have been a case of love at first sight?"

"No, scarcely that. Ah, here comes the person in question. She will tell you a little story," I said. I went to the window and beckoned to Edith. She came into the room, fastening a spray of roses into her dress. She looked composed, except that her beautiful eyes met those of her mother somewhat timidly. She sat down on the arm of Mrs. Baring's chair.

"Mother darling," she began, putting her arm round the elder woman's shoulders.

The way was prepared for her, and I escaped quietly from the room.

Later on in the afternoon the engaged couple came to me, looking radiant.

"The crime is out," said Edith, "and we are forgiven. We have even received all the blessings. I am rather humiliated by the way my family gives its consent to part with me. Come and congratulate the family. We are having tea outdoors."

I went out and found "the family" looking very happy. Mrs. Baring kissed me, and the two brothers shook hands with me vigorously.

"No wonder that Anglo-Saxon *expansion* is dreaded," I remarked, shaking my bruised fingers.

"A pun!" exclaimed Jack.

"Ah, you have understood my French meaning," I said, laughing.

This little tea, to celebrate the engagement, was delightful. We were seated under the shade of a group of old trees, in the midst of a mass of bright flowers, with a cat and four dogs for company. I could not help admiring the dignity with which Edith bore her new honours. Mrs. Baring had not recovered from her surprise, but her face beamed with happiness.

Philip Beaumont dined at Loftshall, and a domestic was sent to inform his uncle and to bring back the prescribed uniform.

After dinner I sat with Mrs. Baring on the terrace. She was wearing her prettiest cap and one of those little white Indian shawls so dear to the Englishwoman. It was one of those lovely summer nights, no darker than gloaming, which are specialties of the Unknown Isle. Rodney and Jack had disappeared, and the engaged couple were strolling in the garden under the old cedar trees.

"Edith certainly deserves her happiness," I said. "She has been very brave, and borne her burden entirely alone."

"It was not necessary to bear it alone," remarked her mother with some bitterness.

"No; but it would have been selfish otherwise," I said. "You understand now why she took refuge in the Catholic religion."

"No, I do not; for I have found strength enough in the Bible to enable me to undergo trials which were harder and which have endured longer than hers."

"Human creatures are like plants," I urged, "they all have different requirements. Some need more sun and some more shade."

"Creatures of the same race should not have such different needs."

"But in the daughter, there is always something of the father, as well as of the mother."

I did not look at my hostess, but I felt the blush and the

emotion that my words would cause her. They were daring words, Edith would have called them profound ones.

For some moments there was silence between us, and then my hostess said:

"That is quite true. Edith is a Baring."

We were silent again, until the engaged couple, after disappearing from sight, suddenly appeared again. The mother gazed at her daughter with a certain melancholy not unmixed with surprise in her eyes.

"Should you like to go back to those old pages of life?" I asked.

No one, I am sure, had ever asked her such a question. She was a little shocked by it, but she smiled finally.

"Go back to those old pages, and live again those that followed? Oh, no," she said. "No!"

"Well, then," I added, "you see all is well."

"Yes," she said, looking up at the sky, in which the first stars were now appearing, "and all will be still better!"

Loftshall.

My friends wanted me to stay with them until they left for Scotland, and I yielded. Those last days were absolutely perfect, and I could not have left the Unknown Isle with a better impression.

I went about in all directions, by rail, boat, or driving. I visited Bristol and Wells. There are any number of houses of the Tudor period in the locality. There are also century-old thatched cottages, abbeys, cathedrals, of fine style, and little shaky-looking churches surrounded by old tombstones, a Saxon chapel, Roman ruins, old historical haunts, little villages of bygone days, nooks and corners which Progress has missed. Men have prayed a great deal, and fought a great deal in those old spots. Within a somewhat limited space are samples of all Nature's beauties. There is the Avon, with its slow course, then there are green valleys, a little lake, steep or gently undulating hills, gay meadows, a beautiful plain, some scraps of forest, steep rocks, fantastical grottoes and quarries from

which the famous Bath stone is taken, a yellowish-grey stone of a soft colour and delicate grain, but very enduring. It seems to me that the soul of the people in that part of the world is strangely like it. It is all one colour, and has the gentleness, the delicacy, and the same unyielding resistance.

I went several times to Bath, and was more delighted with it each time. I like people and things with a past. By electric light the grey town looks very beautiful. There is a moonlight effect about it, then. Its two semi-circles of colonnades, the Circus and the Royal Crescent, look like fragments of some Roman amphitheatre transported there. I regretted that the two architects Wood, who had planned it, should never have seen it lighted in this way.

In all these excursions I greatly appreciated the attitude of Rodney, Jack, and Philip Beaumont. I was conscious all the time of that manly and affectionate protection which is the gallantry of the Anglo-Saxon, and which makes one feel his force.

Loftshall is delightful now. It seems as though it has been touched by an invisible hand, and this hand has given warmth and light to it. Its cypress trees seem less stiff, its verdure less gloomy, and its cedars less severe-looking. There is a joyous movement in the old house, a perpetual coming and going, gaiety, youthfulness, and love. There are four lovers now, and all this has dispersed the chilly atmosphere that the Wilkes bachelors had left behind them. There is also the complete opening out of a soul, the victory won by a sentiment which for so long a time had been fought against and trampled on. I can scarcely take my eyes off the transfigured face of Edith. Philip Beaumont is like a man who has come safely to land after a shipwreck, and who appreciates life doubly after having nearly lost it.

I feel sure, too, that this engagement completes Rodney's happiness. He must have regretted deserting Edith who had always been his staunch comrade. In his anxiety to let Ruby know how glad he was, and to give her a surprise, he sent her the following telegram:

"Sister engaged. Guess to whom?"

He received a reply at once:

"Philip Beaumont. Delighted!"

On reading this telegram, a look of comic amazement came over his face, and he at once felt great respect for feminine perspicacity.

"Clever little girl," he said quietly, with a smile, folding the telegram carefully and putting it away in his pocket, as though it had been the autograph of the little girl in question.

Jack gives me great joy. He is always asking me questions about Miss Reynolds. A man in love could compete with an American interviewer. He has made me tell him about her chats in the evenings, and yesterday, with a weakness of which I am ashamed, I let myself go entirely and described her to him, just as I had so often seen her in my room, seated on a low chair, looking so refined and elegant, with her back turned to the electric light, and a pretty shadow falling on her face.

"She used to tell me her dreams," I added, "dreams that were very different from those of a French girl. At one time she wanted to found a workman's club, then a school, and even a convent, but a Protestant convent. She had quite decided never to marry."

This breach of confidence did not disconcert the young Englishman at all. He laughed in a mocking way, and put his chin up in the air with a defiant gesture which is peculiar to him. I fancy this young man would know how to lay siege and win the consent of the woman he loved.

Jack has extraordinary influence over his mother. Instead of respecting her ideas as his brother and sister do, he fights them with all the daring of youth. Their arguments on the subject of free trade, workmen's syndicates, the American invasion, etc., entertain me immensely. They enable me to see the headway that has been made. Yesterday, after exposing to his antagonist, very clearly, the aspirations of the modern mind, he added, with a touching mixture of affection and authority:

"I do not want to leave you behind, mother. I want to